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ABSTRACT

This volume of essays on migration was written primarily by graduate students in the social sciences. The authors, natives of six different countries, discuss population displacement by emphasizing these four themes: (1) the alienation of refugees; (2) the interplay between hosts and newcomers; (3) the consequences of the growth of agencies that deal with refugees; and (4) the processes of uprooting and readjustment. Following an introduction on "Migrants and Their Hosts" (E. Colson), the book contains the following chapters: (1) A Case Study in International Refugee Policy: Lowland Lao Refugees (M. Lacey); (2) Living in a State of Limbo: A Case Study of Vietnamese Refugees in Hong Kong Camps (G. Bousquet); (3) Keeping Refugee Status: A Tibetan Perspective (D. M. De Voe); (4) Refugees and the Structure of Opportunity: Transitional Adjustments to Aid among U.S. Resettled Lao Iu Mien, 1980-1985 (J. Habarad); (5) Control of Contrast: Lao-Hmong Refugees in American Contexts (L. Schein); (6) Dealing with Frustration: A Study of Interactions between Resettlement Staff and Refugees (S. Gold); (7) Transformations in Perception of Self and Social Environment in Mexican Immigrants (M. Suarez-Orozco); (8) Assimilation Patterns of Koreans in the United States (E. Kim); (9) Rusticating Chinese Educated Youth: Adaptation Processes (W. Chao); (10) Transmigration Policies in Indonesia: Government Aims and Popular Response (O. Abdoellah); and (11) Regressivism in the Progressive Era: Immigrants, Eugenists, and Ethnic Displacement (S. Morgan). (VM)

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PEOPLE IN UPHEAVAL

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Scott M. Morgan and Elizabeth Colson, editors
University of California at Berkeley

1987
Center for Migration Studies
New York

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The Center for Migration Studies is an educational non-profit institute founded in New York in 1964 to encourage and facilitate the study of sociodemographic, economic, political, historical, legislative and pastoral aspects of human migration and refugee movements. The opinions expressed in this work are those of the authors.

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Preface

The essays in this volume are the outcome of a year-long seminar given in the department of anthropology at UC Berkeley from 1983 to 1984. It was led by Professors Elizabeth Colson and George De Vos and attended by Professor James Anderson, all anthropologists at Berkeley. The essays are written by anthropology and sociology graduate students and two social workers, with an introduction by Professor Colson. The points of origin of the authors suggests how general the concern with migration has become, for they come from Argentina, the People's Republic of China, France, Indonesia, and Korea as well as the United States.

In conjunction with the seminar, participants organized four sessions at the 1984 Kroeber Anthropological Society annual meetings on migration and resettlement. Habarad, Gold, and Morgan contributed essays on the Iu Mien, Vietnamese, Soviet Jews, and U.S. host populations as they did in this volume but focused on different concepts and aspects of the refugee and immigrant situations. Other presentations examined Indochinese refugees in the United States, by Jacqueline Desbarats, Nepalese traders in Southeast Asia, by Merritt Cooke, and Tamils in the U.S., by Kelsey Clark Underwood. Plenary session speakers included Lydio Tomasi, director of the Center for Migration Studies, Dennis Gallagher of the Refugee Policy Group, Roy S. Bryce-Laporte, former director of the Smithsonian Institution's Research Institute on Immigration and Ethnic Studies, and Eugeen Roosens, anthropology professor at the Catholic University of Leuven. These presentations, along with comments by Elizabeth Colson, are published in the *Kroeber Anthropological Society Papers* Nos. 65-66, 1986 (c/o Department of Anthropology, UC Berkeley, CA 94720).

The seminar, this volume, and the Kroeber *Papers* were sponsored by the Migration and Resettlement Studies (MARS) program in the department of anthropology at UC Berkeley. MARS began as and remains a graduate student research group interested in all aspects of migration and resettlement. As Lydio Tomasi said in

the Kroeber *Papers*, the West Coast is "where the action is" regarding influx and resettlement of both immigrants and refugees, and as such is the logical fertile ground from which a local research center can grow. We hope that the future will hold more promise for MARS or a research center like it.

We also gratefully acknowledge the partial support of this volume's publication by the Wenner Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research.

The Editors
August 1986
Berkeley, California

Introduction: Migrants and Their Hosts

Elizabeth Colson

General Themes

The papers in this volume deal with a major 20th century phenomenon—massive population displacements, for, as Said has written, "Ours is the age of the refugee, the displaced person, mass immigration" (1984:50).

Some go voluntarily, as the search for jobs and a better material standard of living leads them to emigrate from rural areas to cities or across regional and national boundaries. Many are forcibly uprooted, the unhappy consequence of major development projects, such as man-made lakes, or because governments decide to redistribute populations for other reasons, or frequently enough because of wars or political upheaval. Whatever the reasons for uprooting, those involved share some common experiences as they attempt to reestablish themselves in strange places among people who regard them as strangers and disturbers of their own peace. They are exiles in a strange land, for exile "is life led outside habitual order" (Said 1984:55), and this is true even of those who are moved but a few miles as a consequence of urban renewal programs or the creation of man-made lakes (Colson 1971; Scudder and Colson 1982; Roper 1981). But it is the refugee who is likely to feel the extremes of alienation, especially those refugees who are caught in what Bousquet in this volume calls the limbo of camp life, where everything is seen as temporary and unrelated to both past and future.

Those who go feel the tragedy of uprooting and the loss of home and community. They continue to feel the impact of the wrench of departure and the journey outwards. But neither is of much importance to the host populations among whom they settled, for here it is the fact of their arrival and the adjustments of the hosts to their presence that are of most significance. Host populations may care lit-

tle about why people have left their own homes. As Lacey points out in this volume, it is only in the 20th century that a clear-cut distinction has emerged between refugees and voluntary immigrants. When host countries feel the threatened influx of immigrants the distinction again tends to blur, as witness the increasing hostility within the United States to further admission of refugees from Southeast Asia.

Under international agreements, refugees have a peculiar political status that gives them a claim upon the international community for protection and sustenance. But to make good this claim they must be judged to have fled in response to physical fear of oppression by their own governments. Those who leave because they cannot make a living at home, because of inadequate resources or discriminatory practices, are not refugees, though their fear of hunger may be real enough and their governments oppressive. Those who cross international borders without permits can claim asylum only if they make good their claim to be refugees. Others are defined as illegal aliens and subject to deportation though they may regard their situation at home as desperate. When host countries feel themselves overwhelmed by the entry of large numbers of migrants, they are tempted to downplay the fears that force people out and define their flight as migration to a preferred economic niche. The United States government is also loathe to grant refugee status unless it regards the homeland government as a threat (Dietrich 1986; Helton 1986). This ambiguity of the line between refugee and voluntary migrant is one of the themes that run through the essays in this volume. Refugees and migrants alike risk being unwanted and rejected, and left in "the perilous territory of not-belonging . . . where in the modern era, immense aggregates of humanity loiter as refugees and displaced people" (Said 1984:51).

The interplay between hosts and newcomers is another theme running through the case studies included in this volume, but Lacey and Morgan here focus their own discussion on the responses of the hosts. Lacey deals with shifts in refugee policies since World War II, while Morgan looks at an earlier period in American history when sentiment against immigrants became politicized, leading to new barriers against further immigration and at times to a demand that immigrants be expelled in the interests of national unity. Acceptance of newcomers reflects both their numbers and the stringencies of the host communities. They find most acceptance when hosts see themselves as gaining some benefit from their presence and where competition over resources is played down. This emerges from de Voe's study in this volume of Tibetan communities settled in South India,

and from Chao's description of the reception of the rusticated city youth sent to rural communes within China, where the governments involved took thought to the probable impact of resettlement on existing communities. Harrell-Bond (1986) has come to the same conclusion based on her work among Ugandan refugees where the chaotic competition among international relief agencies exacerbated relationships between refugees and hosts. She urges that international support be channeled through local institutions in a fashion that benefits both refugees and hosts. The Indonesian transmigration program, described here by Abdoullah, speaks to this same issue, for the Indonesian government has settled people from Java and Bali in the outer islands among host populations who do not share in services provided for those resettled.

A third theme emphasizes the consequences of the growth of national and international agencies which now provide a major element in the environment with which refugees cope while in transit or on arrival in a new country. Whereas legal and illegal voluntary migrants who make their way to a new country or resettle themselves in cities at home usually avoid official agencies and rely instead upon kin and former neighbors who have already made the transition to ease their introduction to the new locality, refugees find themselves both aided and trammeled by having to deal with the many agencies which have a mission to work with them. Although all experience with resettled populations indicates that "people naturally turn to their kith and kin in time of need" (Roper 1981:250) as the most powerful resource they have, agencies tend rather to focus on individuals or nuclear families and see success as measured by individual gain. Yet refugees, like other immigrants, rebuild communities as rapidly as possible.

This rebuilding is linked to a fourth theme: the working out of the processes of uprooting and readjustment in what can be called the life cycle of resettlement. All migrants, voluntary or otherwise, experience and use different strategies at different phases of this cycle as they cope with stress (Scudder and Colson 1982). Their strategies include the drawing together of kin and those from the same localities into communities based on home ties, and the strengthening of such communities through rituals that emphasize continuity with the past. Within such communities they can emerge from the anonymity forced on those who are dealt with by the wider society as merely members of a category and they become again individuals with particular statuses which ensure their personal dignity.

The Korean and Mexican immigrants, described here by Kim and Suarez-Orozco, resemble both earlier immigrants and the new refugees in the way they cling to ethnic ties for emotional and economic support while they make their way in a new country. The Vietnamese, Iu Mien, and Hmong refugees, whom Gold, Habarad, and Schein describe, are well along on the same path despite all the efforts made to ensure their assimilation by dispersing them throughout the United States. In fact, policies that seek to prevent the formation of refugee communities only increase the initial stress of resettlement and are but a delaying tactic. When they have a sense of purpose and the reassurance of group support, migrants can take enormous differences in environment in their stride, as witness the Tibetans settled in the heat of Southern India (de Voe, this volume; see also Sorenson 1984:86).

Refugees

Despite their similarities with other migrants, refugees have a unique status and force themselves upon the world's attention because they emerge from and provoke acute crises. It is also becoming increasingly apparent that the forces which create refugees are endemic to the 20th century rather than occasional unpredictable events (Newland 1981:5). The number in refugee status waxes and wanes. In 1980 it was estimated at 16 million. It sank to 7.8 million in 1983 and rose again to 9 million in 1984 and 10 million in 1985 (U.S. Committee for Refugees 1984, 1985). No one can predict how many refugees the world will have in 1990, but the number is certain to be large. The number who will have suffered from displacement at some time or other is and will be enormous. In 1986, 80% of the Lebanese population had been displaced at least once, many it is true only to some other region of Lebanon, although only 40% was displaced at the time of the report (American Friends Service Committee 1986:8).

Countries of refuge find the strain of caring for the influx an almost intolerable burden, especially when they themselves are poor. Pakistan has been the country of first asylum for more than 2.5 million Afghan refugees since 1979, and this is the fourth time since it became independent in 1947 that Pakistan has had to brace itself to receive a massive invasion of those driven to flight by violence or famine (Douglas 1982:14). The 2.5 million refugees in Africa have found asylum in countries with few resources even for their own

people (Kennedy 1982:6), and some countries are rebelling against the burden and thrusting those who come back across the border (Hamilton 1985:23). Even wealthier countries are likely to turn hostile when the influx continues. One, a hundred, even a thousand refugees arouse sympathy; ten thousand arouse terror. The UN estimates that nearly 2 million people have fled Vietnam, Laos, and Cambodia since 1975 (The Economist, August 25, 1984:3). While many have found permanent resettlement in Australia, Europe, Canada, and the United States, fresh outpourings keep open refugee camps in countries of first asylum such as Thailand and Hong Kong, which become more inhospitable as refugees continue to arrive and overseas host countries become increasingly reluctant to accept additional immigrants (United States Committee for Refugees 1984). Still, despite what is known about the dangers of the escape routes and the hardships and uncertainties of camp life, people continue to face the risks (DeVecchi 1982; Shawcross 1983; Crossette 1985).

One such camp was studied by Bousquet. The camp, located in Hong Kong, houses Vietnamese refugees until they find permanent resettlement in some other country or agree to return home. The camp reflects both the government's compassion for the refugees and its determination to make camp life sufficiently unpleasant to serve as a deterrent to others who contemplate flight. Lacey reports the same hardening of attitude in Thailand which has no intention of becoming permanent host to the many Laotians and Cambodians who have crossed its borders, and now insists that the stringencies of camp life give no encouragement to new arrivals. Such camps are holding centers, but they are also arenas within which government employees, the staffs of international relief agencies, and the refugees themselves are actors, creating new roles for themselves at the same time that they contend with daily routines played out against the knowledge that whatever happens here is only temporary. The data collected by Bousquet and Lacey underline the fact that long experience in a camp works against the future, for its peculiar environment has little relationship to the world outside. In the camps, the refugees, like other victims of misfortune, run the risk of infantilization, a risk reported also by other observers (e.g., see Harrell-Bond 1986). Veena Das (1985:6) notes that the common assumption of relief agencies "including well-meaning ones, is that victims are unable to take control of their lives." Instead they live in what has been called "nowhere" that is on the way to "nothing."

Many refugees ultimately return home when the danger is past. Lacey reports that voluntary repatriation is seen by the international community as the best solution. The most striking example of successful repatriation is the return from India of more than 10 million Bangladeshi who crossed the border in 1971 during the Bangladesh war of independence and the subsequent Indo-Pakistan War. Less than 4 months after the war ended, the refugee camps in India were closed and the 10 million had returned home (Newland 1981:14-15).

More commonly today, refugees are reluctant to return, as Lacey reports of Laotians held in camps in Thailand. Some may live out their lives in holding camps in countries of first asylum. Others have found it possible to retain permanent refugee status while they also form settlements that reinforce their sense of being a distinctive community oriented to a denied homeland, even many years after their original flight. The Palestinians remain a community in exile. So do the Tibetans who fled to India in 1959 whom Nowak sees as "people trying to find a balance between projected hope and remembered tragedy" (1984:154). Finally, some refugees move on to a new country where they are expected to become permanent members of the nation that gives them asylum but at the cost of their former identity.

The Tibetans described by de Voe have found it possible within India to maintain themselves as Tibetans. India puts no pressure upon them to assimilate, but rather deals with them through a Tibetan government-in-exile. Few have taken Indian citizenship. They live in separate communities under their own government headed by the Dalai Lama. Their lives are dominated by Tibetan rituals and ruled by Tibetan law. They find their meaning in the hope that they will eventually return home to reintroduce the Tibetan way of life to those left behind under Chinese domination. Their children are taught in schools administered by the Tibetan government rather than the Indian government (Nowak 1984:52-104). The Tibetan schools have as one of their explicit aims the preservation of Tibetan culture and history. Of all the situations examined in this volume, the Tibetans seem to have suffered least from the stress of their uprooting. Unlike those incarcerated in camps in Hong Kong and Thailand, where life has no relationship to long-term goals, they see themselves as active citizens. As a consequence they display none of the demoralization reported for the holding camps.

The Tibetan way of life in India is largely underwritten by the continued support of international organizations, as well as by successful enterprises run by the Tibetans themselves. But that support is given primarily to the community and its institutions rather than in

subsidies to individuals or families. Aid under these conditions is much less likely to encourage dependency than when it supports individuals or family units as among Hmong and Iu Mien settled in the United States.

The few Tibetans who have gone to other countries are more apt to take another route open to refugees, that of becoming members of their host communities. Those who do so have most in common with other kinds of migrants. The thousand of so Tibetans who went to Switzerland in the 1960s were given only short-term limited support. They were expected to take jobs and become independent. Within six weeks the majority of adults were working in factories while the children were entered in Swiss school. In 1974, Ott-Marti (1976:43, 44-46) found the majority of children preferring to speak a Swiss language rather than Tibetan and the young and highly educated struggling to become assimilated. Nevertheless, like voluntary migrants such as the Hispanic Americans and Koreans in the United States, the Tibetan immigrants swung between a desire for acceptance as Swiss citizens and a desire to remain Tibetans. De Voe, based on experience in the early 1980s, found them, much like immigrants in the United States, trying to cling to a Tibetan community which provided them with continuity and a sense of dignity when pressures mounted on them to conform to local behavior or they saw themselves dealt with as aliens.

The Hmong and Iu Mien, Laotian highlanders, faced very different conditions when they settled in the United States, in that they could rely upon a variety of special programs set up to ease their transition into self-supporting citizens. Schein and Habarad found them using the relief agencies as a means to protect themselves against any immediate need to find jobs that would force them to cope with the complexities of American life. Before arrival they had already learned dependency since the majority of them had spent some years in refugee camps in Thailand. Schein and Habarad trace the processes whereby they are now reestablishing communities based on intimate ties that cushion them against uncertainties and rebuffs. Although the United States as a country has been hospitable to them, they encountered considerable hostility from the other inhabitants of the low-income neighborhoods which housed them who saw the Hmong and Iu Mien as competitors for space and jobs and as recipients of services and favor denied themselves. In turn Hmong and Iu Mien felt threatened in isolation, with only patrons who lived outside the low-income areas to provide support.

Despite various efforts to induce them to scatter out across the country so that they could be more easily absorbed, they have reassembled to form ethnic communities made vibrant by frequent visits, exchange of goods and services, a proliferation of art and ceremony, and political intrigue. Life is also given purpose by planning for the future, but that future is most likely to be linked to furthering the immigration of kin left behind rather than striving to improve their own economic chances through a search for employment or the opening of small businesses. In this, however, they would be competing with the much better educated Vietnamese and lowland Lao who arrived before them and have occupied many of the economic niches available to newly arrived immigrants.

The Hmong and Iu Mien differ from the Vietnamese and Soviet Jews described by Gold, as well as from the Mexican and Korean immigrants described by Suarez-Orozco and Kim, in their continued dependence. In part this is explainable by their lack of formal education and technical skills suitable for an urban environment and by the fact that they began to arrive only when unemployment rates were rising. Employment among Southeast Asian refugees varies directly with the length of time they have been resident in the United States (Strand 1984; The Economist, April 27, 1985). But the Hmong and Iu Mien also arrived at a time when the United States had instituted a policy of providing refugees with three years of support which shielded them from any immediate need to find employment and placed them in the category of welfare recipients whose stigma they try to escape by stressing the debt owed to them as wartime allies of the United States.

The better educated Vietnamese and Soviet Jews, with whom Gold worked, arrived with more saleable skills and often without having experienced life in a holding camp. Many came from cities and had professional training. The Soviet Jews, especially, arrive expecting to better themselves and are unwilling to put up with what they regard as second-class treatment, nor do they wish to be subject to regulation by employees of assisting agencies. Initially, they may have used agencies to expedite their immigration, but rapidly they preferred to use kin in the search for jobs, housing, and guidance on how to succeed in the new environment. Gold sees both groups as seeking to shed the refugee status, interested primarily in obtaining the kinds of jobs that will enable them to secure the life-style they associate with middle-class America, though not necessarily at the expense of the ethnic communities they are also building. Indeed, some of them find in the buildup of an ethnic community the surest source of a clientele

that supports their skills and business enterprises.

In this, both groups resemble closely the Korean immigrants studied by Kim and the Mexicans studied by Suarez-Orozco, although they appear to be more conscious of the progress they are making. This damps down the bitterness they feel at being forced to adapt to the strangers among whom they live, while the arrival of new refugees reminds them of the conditions from which they have fled. If they have not yet developed as thoroughgoing a critique of their host society as many other immigrants, this may also reflect the length of time they have been in the United States, for they are newcomers in comparison with both the Koreans and the Mexicans, and not as far into the life cycle of resettlement. They have survived the first trauma of uprooting and resettlement and begun the exploration of new possibilities, but their definitions of success are still conditioned by their experiences as refugees in flight (Ferguson 1984).

Voluntary Immigrants

The Mexicans and Koreans, like most voluntary migrants, arrived because they hoped to improve their opportunities, but their long-term goals were not necessarily related to acceptance by their hosts. They expected to find work in the United States which they could capitalize either into a better life back home or a prosperous existence in the new country. In a sense they are posed between two goals, as the refugees are not, and they arrived with no sense that their experience of oppression gave them any right to support from others. They were prepared to face initial hardships because they thought their goals attainable, and because they continued to compare conditions they encountered with those they voluntarily left. As Suarez-Orozco comments, through newly arriving compatriots, or from letters and newspapers and other sources of home news, Mexican immigrants were in a position to compare the realities of life in both places, and because they had the choice to return they were inclined to emphasize what they gained from immigration. When they made a commitment to remain, they had less reason to monitor existing conditions at home, and it was at this point that they became more conscious of what they saw as inequities and prejudice, and felt most bitterly the rub of exile.

Voluntary immigrants may suffer more stress as time goes by, unlike refugees and those uprooted by resettlement programs who are traumatized by the stress of departure and need to find immediate

reassurance in their new environments because they have no alternative refuge at home. The latter then can be expected to make more demands immediately upon their host population, because their goal is immediate acceptance and success. Immigrants whose long-term goals focus upon the home country which continues to be accessible have less reason to try to alter themselves or to demand acceptance. Nor do such immigrants necessarily begin immediately to build the kind of institutions that would mark them off as a separate community, for this takes money and energy preferably devoted to quick attainment of reunion with kin and friends. Those who are in the country illegally may desire only to escape notice. But as time goes on, they too begin to want more of life than the satisfaction of accumulating a nest-egg to take home. They come to question working conditions and their treatment by other Americans, and funds once saved to underwrite a better life at home begin to be used in creating new institutions that link them to fellow immigrants and celebrate the key symbols of their homeland (Piore 1979).

Compulsory Internal Migration

Much of what is experienced by refugees and other immigrants is shared by those who are forced into resettlement within their own countries, whether this is to ease population pressure in particular regions or for development purposes. Probably more people have been affected by such forms of displacement than by the upheavals that have led to refugee status. In this volume, Abdoellah and Chao describe two massive programs that have affected millions. Those involved in such displacements find their lives suddenly disrupted, much like refugees, and they face the need to fit into a strange environment, as do migrants across national boundaries. Frequently they are also forced to deal with specialized agencies set up to move them from one place to another and to keep them there after arrival. They lose resources, for much of their existing knowledge of people and environment is not applicable elsewhere, and governments rarely cover all the monetary costs of removal and resettlement. They demonstrate their unhappiness by clinging to kin and the known, unwilling to risk what they still retain through experimenting with new techniques and new relationships. Many appear to need to rebuild communities before they can feel free once again to play with fate.

From 1968 to 1975, China required some 12 million young men and women who had finished school to leave the cities to become

peasants in the countryside. Wei Yang Chao, who was one of those involved, describes this program of "rustication." The government had pragmatic reasons in that rustication was a hedge against urban unemployment and unrest, but it was also impelled by an ideology which prized the peasants and sought to minimize class differences.

The city youths either pioneered new settlements, especially in the northwestern provinces, or found their places in existent and by no means welcoming peasant communities. Many experienced this as exile, and all experienced it as hardship despite the assurance that they were undertaking a noble task for their country. Chao argues that the sense of working for something larger than themselves was an important element in spurring them to adjust. Nevertheless they found it difficult to adapt to the very different customs they encountered, just as they themselves were seen as foreigners. Chao reports that they often regarded themselves as exploited by their hosts, especially since the government subsidy was paid to host communities rather than to those who had been rusticated. In fact, however, that subsidy ensured that host communities derived some benefit from taking them in and must have done something to reduce hostility toward the untrained youth who initially were a drain on scarce resources. Nothing else cushioned the city youth who had to learn to work like the peasants, and do so quickly, if they wanted to survive. The great majority of them did so, even though they were frequently thrust among those whose language they did not understand and whose customs they despised. Adjustment was always difficult, but apparently the ones who adapted most easily were those who formed their own communities and could maintain a separate identity linked to a sense of themselves as a displaced city elite.

Like others discussed in this volume, the Chinese city youth swung between the desire for local acceptance and a desire to remain themselves, and many remained unreconciled to the new life. In 1985, according to newspaper reports, delegations were still arriving in the capital to petition for permission to return home to the cities, while others had already escaped with the shift of government policy in the late 1970s.

Even more massive internal migration is planned by Indonesia. Abdoellah examines programs for "transmigration," tracing the first efforts back to the turn of the century when Indonesia was a colony of the Netherlands. So far, as he indicates, such programs have been minimally successful, for only about 3.5 million people have been moved since 1905, 70% of these having gone since 1979. Over the next 20 years Indonesia plans to shift 65 million people from over-

crowded Java and Bali to the islands of Sumatra, Sulawesi, Kalimantan, and West Irian (New Guinea). Some will go willingly, for spontaneous transmigration has been increasing as more and more people have kin in the outer islands and as the infrastructure there improves. Here, as elsewhere, migrants favor chain migration which ensures them of welcome and dependable guidance. There is also the sense that the situation at home is growing desperate because neither land nor jobs exist to provide livelihood for the rapidly increasing populations of Java and Bali. Nevertheless, transmigration on the projected scale implies that many will go under compulsion and without adequate provision, for it now costs approximately $9,000 to move a family and ensure it a good start in frontier areas, far more than the Indonesian government can allot (The Economist, August 4, 1984:61-62).

The Indonesian government has tried to encourage villages to move as units, thus ensuring that the migrants are members of an ongoing community, and it has also preferred to keep extended families together rather than deal solely with nuclear families. It has discouraged individuals from moving on their own, a policy of which Abdoellah disapproves, but which is probably sound thinking, given the evidence that migrants under stress look to the familiar for support. At the same time, moving a village means that those who might be prepared to venture if there were a familiar haven to return to in case of failure may be reluctant to go. In other migrant situations, those who go appear to be prepared to invest a good deal of hard-won capital in improving their home communities through remittances and after return migration. The destruction of such home bases, which are seen as ultimate places of refuge, is a major source of stress among refugees and those displaced by man-made lakes.

The inhabitants of the outer islands who see themselves invaded by the migrants have reacted predictably with suspicion and hostility, exacerbated by the fact that they are neither compensated for the resources they must relinquish to the newcomers nor benefited by such amenities as the government provides for the migrants. Faced with this hostility and with a hostile physical environment, migrants from Java and Bali in turn cling to each other and to the language and customs of home, thereby increasing local suspicion of those who fear for the continuity of their own language and culture. Faced with homesickness, hostility, and the hardships of pioneering in an environment strange to them, many of those resettled under earlier programs have abandoned their holdings and returned to face the known hardships of their home islands. Those who have stayed have

displayed the characteristic pattern of the displaced in spending much time and effort in elaborating ritual and other symbols that link them with their past, for as Said has written, "At bottom, exile is a jealous state. With very little to possess, you hold on to what you have with aggressive defensiveness [which leads to an] exaggerated sense of group solidarity" (1984:51).

Despite the failures, Abdoellah believes that Indonesia has no choice but to proceed with transmigration, given population pressure and the distribution of resources. He believes, however, that it is possible to modify the programs in such a way as to ease resettlement for those who go and to ease tensions between migrants and hosts.

The Threat of the Stranger and the Host Response

That a large influx of strangers is seen as threatening to existent communities, whether these be refugees, immigrants, or displaced fellow citizens, is a fact of life. Most of the articles in this volume demonstrate it, just as do daily news reports throughout the world. In Africa the expulsion of settled aliens has been a common feature since independence: in May 1985 Nigeria expelled 700,000 aliens, giving them two weeks to cross the borders, a repeat of the earlier expulsion of some 2 million aliens in 1983, some of whom had found refuge in Nigeria from drought and famine or political uncertainties at home while others were long-term labor migrants (Time, May 20, 1985:36). Such expulsions are now commonplace, and the threat of expulsion hangs over millions of those now living outside their countries of origin (cf. Special Issue, International Migration Review 18(3), 1984). Various observers have reported the rise of antagonism to foreign workers and other immigrants in Britain, France, Germany, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United States as their numbers have made them more visible and unemployment rose with the depressed economic conditions of the late 1970s and 1980s. The German government encourages foreign workers to return home; many Germans show their hostility more directly (Gupte 1984).

Lacey has examined how pressure has mounted in the United States over the last decade to drive out undocumented aliens and to restrict further immigration, including that of refugees. This is happening at the same time that American policy is destabilizing economies and governments elsewhere in the world and so increasing the flow of those who seek both livelihood and asylum. The mobilization against the stranger within the gates is no new phenomenon.

Morgan provides a detailed case study of the mobilization of various groups within the United States against immigrants from Eastern and Southern Europe during the first quarter of the 20th century, the parents and grandparents of those who now call for restricted immigration. He examines the various kinds of fears that were synthesized into an ideology that could be used to justify demands for legislative action, and traces the link-ups of the various organizations, unlikely partners as they were originally, that eventually cooperated in pressing the case against the immigrants.

His article illuminates current host responses throughout the world as more and more people are crossing boundaries, forcing others to consider new demands upon their resources and sympathies, challenging each other by differences in values, and putting in question cherished continuities. Just as the uprooted have a life cycle, whose course can usually be predicted, so does the response of those who receive them. No community willingly faces disruption, unless the gains to be made are very great. Disruption too is a form of exile, and it is not surprising that host communities, like the displaced, draw in upon themselves, give new emphasis to existing values, and elaborate the rituals that mark their distinctiveness.

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1

A Case Study in International Refugee Policy: Lowland Lao Refugees

Marilyn Lacey

> "Who would want to leave the village of his birth?"
>
> "Six years, two months and twenty-five days I was in a re-education camp [in Laos] until I escaped and swam across the Mekong. Now I wait more than two years in the refugee camp. When will I come out from this darkness?"
>
> "I am a bird in a cage. My life is broken. My country is lost. What can the future be?"

These comments, spoken to me in 1982 by young Lao men who had tears in their eyes, expressed sentiments shared by the 20,000 lowland Lao refugees then interned by Thai authorities in the official "austerity camp" at Ban NaPho, Nakorn Phanom Province, in northeastern Thailand. Who are these people? What would become of them? How was the international community involved in determining their future? What does it mean to be a refugee in the 20th century?

My interest in these questions developed during a year's work in Nong Khai refugee camp, Thailand, in 1981-82. From an initial interest in the cases of a few families, my focus broadened to the larger issues governing refugee flight, asylum, resettlement, and/or repatriation. Through interviews, correspondence, and library research it became evident that the fate of refugees is enmeshed in a labyrinthine web of international policies and politics. This article is an attempt, then, to situate the experience of the lowland Lao refugees within the context of a more global perspective and to examine how their experience can be used to illustrate the complexities facing the United States as it develops its refugee policies.

Historical Perspective

There have always been refugees. Wars, persecutions, and natural disasters in every age have caused people to flee their native lands to search for safety elsewhere. Yet only in this century has the world had to grapple with refugees as an international problem. Why? One might point to the rise of totalitarian governments, the pressures of the population explosion, or the deplorable effects of war. All contribute to refugee flows, but what makes refugee situations so difficult in our time is one deceptively simple fact: all of the world's habitable land has been claimed, divided up among nation-states each of which exercises sovereignty over its own territory. As a consequence, refugees have nowhere to go that does not entail crossing fixed borders, thereby embroiling themselves in national and international politics:

> Refugees . . . are no longer merely those physically uprooted: they are, in both a national and international context, euphemistically identified as being—and creating—"problems." [D'Souza 1980:5]

The "refugee problem" was given prominence in Europe at the close of World War II. In subsequent decades it has generated increasingly formal remedies, classifications, and legislation.

In 1950, designated as World Refugee Year, the first United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Dr. van Heuven Goedhart, was appointed. He and his staff drafted the first 1951 U.N. Convention on the Status of Refugees, which defines a "refugee" as follows:

> Any person who owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable, or owing to such fear, unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his habitual residence, is unable, or owing to such fear, unwilling to return to it. [D'Souza 1980:7]

The 1951 Convention, however, addressed itself only to events in Europe prior to January 1, 1951. The 1967 U.N. Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees amended it to cover all refugees, regardless of time or geography.

Essentially these two international agreements guarantee two human rights:

1) Freedom from persecution, such that every person is entitled to a life without persecution, and that the international community will assist individuals to gain that freedom.

2) The principle of "non-refoulement," i.e., safeguarding refugees from forcible repatriation to their own country or place of persecution.

In order to qualify for the protection afforded by Convention and Protocol, a person must have crossed a national boundary to claim refugee status, demonstrated a well-founded fear of persecution, and been granted official asylum. Asylum is offered by the nation of refuge as a "privilege." The international community has been loathe to acknowledge it as a "right." At the U.N. Conference on Territorial Asylum held in Geneva in 1977, conference members struggled with, and failed to agree on, what is meant by "the right of asylum" (Grahl-Madsen 1980:Ch. 6). Refugees thus do not have a legal right to asylum, and countries of refuge are free to refuse to accept them. Malaysia, for instance, refused admittance to some boat people in 1979, forcing them back onto the open sea at gunpoint (Wain 1981:204). In 1984, only 60% of the world's nation-states had signed the U.N. Convention and Protocol. Communist bloc nationals were conspicuously absent from the list of signees, as were some of the countries in Southeast Asia who bore the region's heaviest refugee burdens—for example, Thailand and Malaysia.

The international community continues to treat the appearance of successive waves of refugees as temporary emergencies, despite massive evidence to the contrary. Only in the past decade has there been a partial recognition of the awful dimensions of the problem. The word "refugee" may once have invoked the image of a brave individual beginning life anew in a foreign land: now it invokes the masses of "men, women and children, pot-bellied and gaunt, stumbling vainly from camp to inhospitable camp, unseen, ignored, and often uncared for" (Shawcross 1979:3). In the early 1980s, estimates of the total number of refugees ranged from a low of 10 million to a high of 18 million, with most falling in the range around 12 million (Schroeder 1980:394; D'Souza 1980:5; Tripp 1983:61). Over half are children. The problem is a cumulative nightmare, not likely to lessen in the forseeable future.

Global problems require global solutions. The Office of the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) fully expected, in 1951, that it would go out of business once it had "tidied up Europe" after World War II. Instead it has seen its mandate and capabilities stretched to the breaking point by wave after wave of refugee crises

around the world. It can justly boast of having helped 25 million refugees between 1951 and the present, yet it is not without its critics.

A delegation sent by the United States' House of Representatives to Southeast Asia in 1978 to study the refugee problem reported that the crisis was in part the result of UNHCR deficiencies: its slowness in responding to crises, excessive diffidence in dealing with host governments, and inefficient use of funds donated by the United States (Wain 1981:263-64). But, even if it were blessed with ideal management and unhampered in the implementation of its mandate, the UNHCR would still be hobbled by the very nature of its status vis-à-vis sovereign nation-states. It operates within any given country only by invitation of that country's government, and only within the parameters established by that government. Often it hesitates to protest perceived injustices lest a host country take offense and retaliate by curbing UNHCR activities inside its borders. This apparently was the case in June 1979 when it failed to protest when the Thai army forcibly repatriated over 40,000 Khmer into Kampuchea (St. Cartmail 1983:214; Stone and MacGowan 1980:80; Ashworth 1979:5; Kiljunen 1984:49; Wain 1981:208). Whatever its shortcomings, however, the UNHCR remains the key international agency providing legal and material support to refugees. In the absence of a stable world order which recognizes and protects human rights and settled disputes peacefully, the services of the UNHCR will continue to be needed.

The UNHCR sees three non-interchangeable long-term solutions to refugee problems: voluntary repatriation, integration into the country of refuge, and resettlement in third countries (Grahl-Madsen 1980:102).

1) Voluntary repatriation. The emphasis here is on the adjective "voluntary." It must be the free decision of the refugee to return to his or her own country, without coercion, intimidation, or force from the authorities in the country of refuge.

2) Integration into the country of refuge. Occasionally countries of refuge permit refugees to settle permanently, but this usually happens only if the number of refugees is small and their presence is not considered to be politically destabilizing.

3) Resettlement in third countries. The post-1975 exodus from Southeast Asia highlighted the necessity for permanent relocation of some refugee groups in "third countries" (i.e., not the country of original asylum). Resettlement is almost always in a first-world, economically developed country.

Of the three approaches, voluntary repatriation is overwhelmingly preferred and most commonly advocated by the international

community. It is not always acceptable, however, to the refugees themselves, as the following news item from the May 19, 1982 *Bangkok Post* illustrates:

> Efforts of the [Thai] Interior Ministry and the UNHCR to repatriate 7,200 Lao refugees at Ban NaPho camp have failed, refugee officials in Bangkok said yesterday. An exhibition was held at the camp last month in an attempt to persuade the Laos to go home voluntarily. According to the officials, the exhibition, organized by the Interior Ministry with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, was a failure. Only six refugees have signed up for the repatriation programme since the exhibition was held, they said.

When repatriation is not feasible and integration into the country of refuge is not offered by the host government, resettlement in third countries is undertaken. The world has demonstrated impressive ability to absorb vast numbers of refugees when the political will to do so is present. It is in this international arena that the UNHCR uses its leverage most effectively:

> Though its powers of intervention are clearly limited publicly and officially . . . the High Commissioner and his senior staff unceasingly negotiate the cause of refugees with governments of both member and non-member states. This role of negotiation and persuasion is a powerful one. . . . UNHCR cannot grant asylum, cannot provide resettlement and even at times does not have access to information about the circumstances of refugee populations. Its role is one of advice, negotiation and fund-raising, but because it is international in scope, and has funds at its disposal, and because of its long experience in formulating and developing refugee law, it can and does do much to provide solutions. [D'Souza 1980:7]

One dramatic example was the unprecedented meeting convoked by the U.N. in July of 1979 to elicit resettlement offers from the international community (see also Bousquet, this volume). It mustered 260,000 placements for Southeast Asian refugees for the subsequent year (Ashworth 1979:53; UNHCR 1979:5).

Ultimately, however, solutions to refugee problems lie not with the U.N. but with national governments. These governments, in formulating their policies, must wrestle with the dilemma of how best to reconcile international humanitarian obligations with internal domestic obligations and the demands of their own citizens. In the early 1980s the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, Mr. Poul Hartling,

contended that the Western World was suffering from "compassion fatigue" in consequence of having had to respond to so many pressing refugee crises (Steif 1982:1). Whether it was due to such weariness,to economic hard times, or other factors, in the early 1980s the leading "receiving nations" in the West cut back severely on the number of refugees they were willing to accept.

The Situation of the Lowland Lao Refugees

Laos is a small, landlocked country. Prior to the disruption caused by the wars in Southeast Asia, approximately half of its 3 million inhabitants lived in the lowlands, cultivating sticky rice; the rest belonged to a number of ethnic groups collectively referred to as "the highland Lao." The lowland Lao were known as gentle and easygoing; perhaps the most oft-used phrase in their language, spoken with a smile and a shrug, is "baw bpen nhyung": "Never mind; it doesn't matter."

Laos tried to remain neutral during the Indochina Wars, but gradually became a battleground, especially after the extensive American involvement. When the United States withdrew its forces in 1975, a Vietnamese-supported Lao communist government was installed. Between then and 1982, more than 10% of the entire Lao population, including both lowland and highland Lao, fled as refugees into Thailand (Van-es-Beeck 1982:324). Until then, despite a long history of internal conflict as kingdoms rose and fell and the French took over the country, Laotians had refused to flee. Now 300,000 of them left.

The changes introduced by the new Lao government have been dealt with elsewhere (see Stuart-Fox, ed. 1982), and here it is necessary to say only that the policy which did most to create the exodus was that of purging all "cultural poisons" which U.S. imperialism had brought into the land (Doré 1982:107). To do so it instituted the prolonged "reeducation" of all civil servants, military personnel, or others suspected of having been infected with Western vices or ideologies. The reeducation process, innocuously termed "seminars," received little attention outside of Laos. Reports, such as one from Bangkok in 1977, certainly sounded bland:

> The post-1975 administration concentrates on changing the attitudes of the people by holding various seminars throughout the territory in order to create new perception more favorable to the central planned socialist economic development. [Ninsananda 1977:29]

The truth about conditions inside the "seminars" did not emerge until 1980, when refugees who had escaped or been released after years of virtual imprisonment and forced labor told their stories. In the words of one survivor, 25 years old:

> I was confined in the PhaDeng jail at Viengxay seminar on 20 March 1978. Very bad jail. I was confined without go out [from the room] 2 years and 8 months and without took bath. We only took some clothes to wet from the rain and to rub on body. Had 300-400 of prisoners in there. I had a small bowl of rice and the soup of canned pig. It was sterile ["rancid"] food; I could not eat it. At last I fall ill, very weak, about two months, couldn't move and had a swell. There had 37 prisoners died from the swell, the illness and from had no food enough. All of them become very pale, very thin. . . . Later they accused me of attempting to escape. They tied my leg tight to the wood and tied my hand. I couldn't move during 6 months. Finally in 3 October 1980 I was sent to work outdoors, to cut the bamboo and pull the log down from the mountain. The prisoners must done everything and followed their [the guards'] orders: if someone didn't follow, they would [be] kick, beat and punished. . . . [Personal letter to author 1982]

As the number of arrests and "disappearances" to seminars increased, more and more Lao families made the decision to seek refuge in neighboring Thailand. By 1980, 4000 persons per month were crossing the Mekong River into Thailand (Refugee Reports 1980).

Having reached Thai soil, the refugees were processed into one of several border camps established for the refugees. Most lowland Lao went to Nong Khai camp, which at one point housed over 40,000 refugees (St. Cartmail 1983:214; Van-es-Beeck 1982:330). From there they were eligible for resettlement abroad, with the majority going to the United States, France, Australia, or Canada.

Thailand, however, felt itself to be in an increasingly precarious and threatened position, flanked by the communist states of Laos and Kampuchea (both occupied by Vietnamese forces), and inundated by seemingly endless waves of refugees arriving on its northern, eastern, and southern borders. Meanwhile, the major resettlement countries began slowing their acceptance rates and Thailand pictured itself shouldering the impossible burden alone. On 1 January 1981, therefore, it instituted a new policy toward refugees: the policy of "humane deterrence" (St. Cartmail 1983:221). Its aim was to prevent

the arrival of refugees in Thailand, just as Hong Kong the following year adopted very much the same policy to discourage Vietnamese refugees from arriving at its doors (see Bousquet, this volume). Thailand proceeded to construct a large "austerity camp" for the internment of all lowland Lao refugees who were already inside Thailand and denied them any opportunity for resettlement overseas. Conditions inside the camp were bleak but livable: 5 persons per small room, 20 rooms per block-style house; survival-level rations supplied by the United Nations; one undersized dispensary staffed by a Thai doctor. Unlike the earlier camps, the austerity camp was closed to all outsiders: no international aid agencies, no foreign teachers, no medical teams, no development programs.

The 20,000 lowland Lao placed in the austerity camp were told by Thai authorities that they had two choices: 1) voluntarily repatriate to Laos, or 2) stay inside the camp forever. This same message was broadcast by radio into Laos, with the intent of discouraging further flight. At the same time, an active program was initiated to promote repatriation. The underlying presumption was that the lowland Lao were "economic migrants" seeking a better life rather than true political refugees fleeing persecution.

Although a voluntary repatriation agreement had been negotiated between Thailand and Laos in 1975, it was not put into effect until 1980. Jacques Mouchet, UNHCR representative in Laos, admitted in 1983 that the program had "been delayed both by political events and because the very idea of voluntary repatriation was at first neither familiar to the refugees nor perceived as a real possibility" (Mouchet 1983:6). One might add that neither was it deemed a palatable option since the very fact of having fled as a refugee marked one as a traitor to the state. By March of 1983 only 2,262 persons had returned to Laos under this program. At a formal "handing-over ceremony" the returnees were given a resettlement package by the UNHCR containing utensils, household goods, farming tools, mosquito nets, and blankets. In addition, they were provided with a year's supply of free rice. Then they were taken by Lao authorities to transit centers for reorientation.

No one knows exactly what happened after that. Some refugees told me, with a grin, that they knew people who had gone through repatriation and then, having quickly sold the goods provided by the UNHCR, fled a second time across the Mekong into Thailand. Others spoke of friends who returned to Laos but had not been heard from since.

By anyone's standards, the much-promoted repatriation program

has not taken hold, despite the fact that UNHCR, Thailand, and the United States have all backed it with their policies and funding. From 1981 to 1983, lowland Lao believed that they would be subjected to severe recriminations if they returned and preferred the rigors of the austerity camp, continually hoping that Thai policy would again change in their favor. For some this strategy paid off. In mid-1983, two years after the inception of the policy that denied refugees the possibility of resettlement, the Thai government briefly relaxed the restriction and allowed a few thousand of those who had arrived in 1981 to qualify for resettlement abroad. Again, in the spring and summer of 1984, several thousand more were permitted to be interviewed and accepted by Western countries. As of late 1984, however, the overall population at NaPho austerity camp had not decreased. On the contrary it was increasing since the inflow of new arrivals outnumbered those released. I suspect that the Thai will continue to maintain a practical balance between a rigid enforcement of the "deterrence" policy and sporadic easement of the ban on resettlement. Above all, Thailand fears being saddled with a residual population of refugees. Therefore, it must ultimately make allowance for the release, if not the repatriation, of large numbers.

The Refugee Policy of the United States

Echoing the famous inscription on America's Statue of Liberty, Ronald Reagan, in his 1980 speech accepting the Republican nomination for the Presidency, asked, "Can we doubt that only a divine Providence placed this land, this island of freedom, here as a refuge for all those people in the world who yearn to breathe free?" (quoted in Donohue 1982:209). A year later he declared that the first principle of the United States' immigration and refugee policy would be to continue its tradition of welcoming those who fled: "We shall also, with other countries, continue to share in the responsibility of welcoming and resettling those who flee oppression" (in Donohue 1982:207).

America boasts a long and proud history of accepting immigrants and refugees, but recently it has become less welcoming again as old fears of being swamped by those seeking haven have reemerged (see Morgan, this volume, for the hardening of attitudes against immigrants around the beginning of the century). In the words of Leon Bouvier of the Population Reference Bureau, "Your heart goes out to refugees and other immigrants, but there is a feeling across the land that enough is enough. . . . America is no longer a nation of empty

frontiers in need of settling" (Chaze 1982:1). Similar sentiments have been voiced with growing frequency as Americans felt the pinch of the economic recession. According to Governor Richard Lamm of Colorado, himself the grandson of immigrants, "Immigration is another of the ideas which served us well in times past, but which hurt us in the decade of the 80s. It is out of control, and the effects penetrate every layer of society" (Chaze 1982:1). Such comments show how easily refugees become indistinguishable from immigrants even though a nation differentiates between the national needs on which its immigration policy is based and the humanitarian response to persons in danger of persecution who are entitled to protection as refugees.

Until 1875, the United States had an open-door policy—the practical result of having no national policy whatsoever regulating the entrance of aliens. In 1875, for the first time Congress established admission criteria. Refugees were treated no differently from other immigrants and were screened on the same basis. The first provision explicitly referring to refugees in any U.S. immigration act came in 1917, when "persons fleeing religious persecution" were exempted from the normal literacy tests for immigrants. When the 1924 immigration act set up a quota system (see Morgan, this volume), special provisions permitted the admission of refugees in times of international emergencies. Special consideration continued to give succor to refugees. Under the Displaced Persons Act of 1948, 400,000 were admitted between 1948 and 1951. The Relief Act of 1953 admitted another 214,000, primarily from communist-controlled Eastern European countries. In contrast to previous legislation, this last act admitted refugees outside the existing immigration quotas.

In 1952 Congress passed the Immigration and Nationality Act which remains the basic law governing immigration to the United States. The Refugee Act of 1980 technically is an amendment of the 1952 legislation. The act contained no specific mention of refugees, though it did give the Attorney General the power to "parole" persons into the country. This permits the person to enter as a "conditional entrant" or "parolee" with the right to apply for readjustment of status to that of permanent resident after 2 years. Parole power has been used often and for large numbers, giving entry to the United States of thousands of Hungarians in the 1950s, Cubans in the 1960s, and Southeast Asians in the 1970s. Use of the power to parole, quite apart from national immigration quotas or other restrictions, was the major means of government response to refugee crises between 1952 and 1980.

The Refugee Act of 1980 introduced significant policy changes. First, it defined "refugee" in accordance with the definitions of the U.N. Convention and Protocol, at long last broadening the official understanding of the term to include persons other than those escaping from communist countries. Second, it established the "normal flow" of refugees to be admitted annually at 50,000, up from the 17,400 limit set in 1965, and gave immigrant status to them once they arrived. An additional number may be admitted only if the President, after consultation with the House and Senate Judiciary committees, determines that a higher number is warranted by the national interest or by humanitarian concerns. From 1983 on the annual refugee ceiling must be determined by the President in concert with Congress. This restricts the independence of the executive branch in refugee matters. Finally, the powerful "parole authority" has been almost entirely revoked. The legislative branch now exercises greater authority in refugee affairs than it has for the past 50 years. Further legislation is in the offing: the comprehensive proposal known as the Simpson-Mazzoli Bill has so far failed to pass Congress, but there is steady pressure for new controls on immigration.

What kinds of motivation underlie current refugee policy? It is not easy to separate rhetoric from policy, nor policy from actual practice. In the words of Richard Feen, Special Consultant to the Office of the U.S. Coordinator for Refugee Affairs:

> No national consensus exists which would accept the curtailment of individual welfare in order to allow the millions of oppressed persons a homeland in the U.S. The dialectic between the rights of the individual and his obligation to others will always remain, offering no solid guidelines for U.S. refugee policy. [reported in Tripp 1983:47]

Though economic and humanitarian factors undeniably play a strong role, paramountcy is given to political considerations, including both international political conditions and internal political sensitivities. Political leaders cannot afford to ignore the voting power of the citizens. They forever walk the tightrope described below:

> The ongoing flood of Southeast Asian refugees into the U.S. is pitting U.S. foreign policy against the country's domestic needs. The conflicts: U.S. obligations lingering from the Vietnam war vs. present economic problems; humanitarian ideals vs. social disruptions to U.S. communities absorbing refugees; the stability of friendly Southeast Asian countries vs. the plight of American poor competing with refugees for shrinking welfare support. [Mitchell 1981:1]

Admittedly public tolerance has been strained by the large influx of refugees, primarily Southeast Asians, since 1975. A Gallup Poll, conducted in May 1980 found 91% of those interviewed favoring a halt to *all* immigration until the nation's unemployment rate dropped to 5% (Rabinove 1981). President Reagan recognized the national mood when he reduced the number of refugees admitted each year, lowering the quotas by more than 50% after 1981. As *Time* noted in 1982: "The decision to narrow the portal [to potential asylum-seekers] stems largely from a growing anti-refugee sentiment in Congress that has been fueled by popular resentment of the boat people in the face of a declining U.S. economy and shrinking social programs" (10 May 1982:17).

Given the backlash, why do policymakers continue to accept any refugees? The 1984 ceiling of 72,000 refugees, though a considerable reduction in comparison with earlier years, is no paltry number. The answer lies partially in the humanitarian sphere, but also in the realities of international politics, for refugee policy is inextricably tied to foreign policy.

Accepting refugees from any country conveys a distinctly negative message to the government of the country from which the refugees have fled. Thus the United States, as an opponent of the Soviet Bloc, welcomes migrants from communist-dominated areas who rarely have had trouble in being granted refugee status. On the other hand, the United States finds it very awkward to grant such status to those who flee a government with which it is on friendly terms or is actively supporting. This explains the lopsided statistics: among the more than 1 million refugees accepted by the United States between 1956 and 1979, a mere 3,000 were from non-communist countries; in fiscal year 1982, 73,522 Southeast Asians were granted asylum as against only 579 Latin Americans, notwithstanding the immense refugee crisis in El Salvador (Refugee Reports Dec. 17, 1982:1).

Likewise, when international relations shift, refugees may find themselves reclassified as economic non-refugees, as happened to the Lao refugees in Thailand. In a statement to the Congressional Subcommittee of East Asian and Pacific Affairs on October 22, 1981, John Holdridge, Assistant Secretary for East Asian and Pacific Affairs, explained:

> As you know, we continue to maintain a small Embassy in Vientiane [Laos], although in recent years relations have been very limited because of Laos' close relations with Hanoi. We do not seek the overthrow of the Lao government, with which we main-

> tain relations. Vietnam has 50,000 soldiers in Laos and the principal Lao Communist Party leaders seem to identify their own interests with those of Hanoi. Recently, there have been signs that the Soviet Union is attempting to develop its own separate presence in Laos, including a marked increase in Soviet involvement in military build-up there.
>
> Despite these powerful influences, Laos does retain at least some degree of autonomy, and many officials there appear to welcome closer relations with the West. Laos depends for its economic survival on maintaining a *modus vivendi* with Thailand. This relationship with the Thais . . . gives Vientiane some distance from Hanoi. We maintain our Embassy in Vientiane to contribute to this effort and to offer some small counterbalance to the Soviet-Vietnamese influence. We are exploring a few possibilities for marginal improvement in our relations with Laos in ways which could conceivably increase Vientiane's cooperation in POW-MIA matters as well as meet some of the humanitarian needs of Laos. [Holdridge 1981:42]

Implicit here is the apprehension that if the West continues to encourage the flight from Laos by holding open the possibility of resettlement, Laos would begin to depend more heavily upon administrators and leaders from Vietnam and the Soviet Union since many refugees are relatively young and educated. Such a prospect was seen as bad news for Vientiane, Bangkok, Beijing, and Washington (Suhrke 1980).

Thailand, for its part, was eager to open up trade relations with Laos once again; consequently it played down the fears of the refugees and encouraged repatriation (van der Kroef 1982). Thailand was and is an important strategic ally of the United States. Therefore the United States upholds Thai refugee policies, including that of "humane deterrence" in effect since 1981 (Douglas and Vine 1982:75). Each small shift in policy on the macro-level affects the lives of thousands of refugees.

Thus American refugee policy, like that of other countries, changes with the shift in the international system, but policy statements also differ according to the audience addressed, giving rise to uncertainty about the real intentions of the government. In 1981, then Secretary of State Alexander Haig assured members of ASEAN (Association of South East Asian Nations, which includes Thailand and Malaysia), that the United States sought "to reduce the burden of refugee camp populations through prompt resettlement of large numbers of refugees in the U.S." (Haig 1981:40). Haig's successor,

George Schultz, repeated that message to a gathering of ASEAN ministers in June of 1983:

> The U.S. is taking steps to simplify its processing procedures and will propose a program to Congress for the next fiscal year which, together with the continued efforts of other resettlement countries, should reduce the refugee population significantly. We remain committed to doing our part in helping ease the refugee burden on ASEAN members. [Schultz 1983:25]

The message for the home audience, however, was different. The Director of the U.S. Bureau for Refugee Programs, Ambassador Richard Vine, told the Foreign Affairs Subcommittee of the Senate Appropriations Committee in 1982: "A principal State Department policy is to favor solutions to refugee problems that minimize the number of persons resettled in this country" (Vine 1982:75). That same year, in testimony before the Senate Judiciary Committee, Acting Secretary of State Kenneth W. Dam explained the downward admissions quotas: "Far from seeking to expand refugee admissions, we accept only refugees of special concern to the United States, who meet our admissions criteria, for whom there are no alternative solutions, and whose admission is required by compelling foreign policy considerations" (Dam and Douglas 1982:57; see also Douglas and Vine 1982:75).

Even within the administrative branch, different divisions may pursue different policies, as did the State Department and the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) in 1981. The former is preoccupied with maintaining international relations, the latter with controlling the numbers entering the United States. When INS began to reject higher and higher percentages of refugee applicants from Thai camps by stringently interpreting the 1980 Refugee Act guidelines for case-by-case interviews, the State Department reacted with alarm, knowing that such retrenchment could trigger another crisis with Thailand. The issue was hotly debated, with the State Department temporarily the victor (Wain 1981; DeVecchi 1983).

U.S. refugee appropriations for 1983, however, were down significantly in all categories except financing for repatriation programs. This offered but dim hope to the lowland Lao who had already waited several years in the NaPho austerity camp in the hope of resettlement.

Conclusion

It has never been easy to be a refugee. Yet in approaching the 21st century, one might have expected that the increasing world inter-

dependence, instant communications, and the emergence of the sense of the "global village" would work to alleviate the plight of refugees. Instead, they now face ever-higher hurdles as the complexity of the world political situation increases. In his 1982 annual report to the United Nations, Poul Hartling, the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees, stated that governments during that year had "adopted an increasingly restrictive approach to refugees and asylum-seekers." His report documented a rising number of incidents in which asylum-seekers were detained or turned away (Hartling 1983). A year later the *World Refugee Survey 1983* found the same negative trend: "It is disheartening to report that . . . conditions for refugees [have] been exacerbated by further deterioration in international standards regarding refugee treatment and protection" (Tripp 1983:3).

As the situation of the lowland Lao demonstrates, there are no facile solutions to refugee problems. They share their plight, with minor variations, with millions of refugees throughout the world. Whatever the debates about what creates and sustains refugees and whatever the political controversies that determine their status, these are real individuals whose basic human rights are at stake. One of the most urgent of current questions is how to find a way to develop effective international agreements and organizations that can ease their misery and give them a stake in the future.

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2

Living in a State of Limbo: A Case Study of Vietnamese Refugees in Hong Kong Camps

Gisele Bousquet

Introduction

Refugees differ from voluntary migrants in that they have had to leave their homeland against their will with no positive motivation to settle anywhere else (Kunz 1973:130). They also differ in two other respects. They become the concern of international organizations created to deal with their plight, and many of them find themselves caught for months or even years in what I am calling a state of limbo, i.e., an intermediate state in which one has exited from the old but is not yet accepted elsewhere. It engenders in those who experience it a sense of being neglected and forgotten. This has been the experience of large numbers of refugees who, having fled their homes, find no immediate permanent asylum, and instead spend months or years in holding camps, facing an anomalous present and an uncertain future.

The closest analogy to their circumstances is that of the prisoner of war who waits out an unchosen and uncertain present and whose reactions to subsequent freedom are linked to the dependencies and strategies created in response to camp life. Unlike prisoners of war, however, refugees do not look forward to reincorporation in a known and friendly homeland. Instead their hope lies in acceptance in a foreign land, albeit today many go to known kin and friends who have already made the transit.

Camp life has some resemblances to what Victor Turner has called liminal periods, found in many rites of transition, where those involved in the rites are divorced from their past under conditions which break old patterns of behavior so that they may reenter their communities in new roles. In initiation, for instance, the neophytes "are neither living nor dead from one aspect and both living and dead from another" (Turner 1967:97). Former social statuses no longer exist to differentiate among those who share the liminal state. But the

situation of the refugees contrasts sharply with that of the neophytes at crucial points, for refugees look back to what they have lost while neophytes look forward to what they will gain. Little in the camps really prepares the refugee for entry into a new country, while neophytes are surrounded with symbols before, during, and after the ritual period that impress upon them the basic requirements of statuses they will assume when they rejoin the community. Refugees and neophytes then are both removed from normal life, but one lives with frustration and the other with hope. The refugee, as Kunz says, "has arrived at the spiritual, spatial, temporal, and emotional equidistant no-man's-land of midway-to-nowhere and the longer he remains there, the longer he becomes subject to its demoralizing effects" (Kunz 1973:133). Others, too, report the lack of initiative and helplessness of refugees caught in the "midway-to-nowhere predicament" (Liu 1979:88).

This article deals with the state of limbo experienced by Vietnamese refugees held in a camp in Hong Kong during 1983. The despondency and loss of initiative they manifested appears to be common among those who find themselves incarcerated in camps in countries of first asylum which can neither admit them as immigrants nor ensure that they find resettlement elsewhere. Lacey (this volume) and others who have visited refugee camps in Southeast Asia note that the sense of displacement among refugees is strong and unmistakable: "Often there was lassitude. Often there was boredom and lack of hope. Families were broken and sometimes never reunited, many of the refugees had an aura of sorrow and tragedy" (Stone and McGowan 1980:61).

Holding camps, however, are an important aspect of the institutionalized refugee system as it has been developed since World War II (see Lacey, this volume). That system includes the refugees themselves, the countries of first asylum, the international refugee agencies, and the host countries to which refugees look for long-term resettlement. All four are implicated in creating the characteristic features of camp life, though camps vary from country to country and change as the number of refugees waxes and wanes and also responds to shifts in international alliances.

The character of a camp also reflects the way refugees view themselves and are viewed by the international community. The Tibetan refugees (de Voe this volume) have been defined by their host country, India, and international agencies as members of an ongoing ethnic community whose primary identification is with their homeland, and they are given the resources and freedom to create a

community in exile. Vietnamese refugees in camps in Hong Kong, during my period of field research in the summer of 1983, were regarded by the Hong Kong government, the international agencies, and the countries of ultimate settlement as individuals in transit, to new countries or back to their homeland, without any real identity. Inevitably this affected the refugee view of themselves as isolates temporarily suspended between their life in Vietnam and whatever the future held.

In this article I examine first the policy of the Hong Kong government, as it has been affected by the historical context within which the government has dealt with refugees, drawing heavily on that government's own description of its handling of what it has regarded as a major crisis (Hong Kong Government 1980). I then describe an open camp and its residents. Finally I discuss how the refugees' status within the camp was seen by them as only a continuation of their status in Vietnam as outcasts excluded from normal life. Condominas and Pottier (1982) have argued that the Vietnamese exodus is due to economic conditions within the country rather than to political considerations. This does not explain why more than 1 million Vietnamese have chosen to live in exile since 1975, though there can be no doubt that economic considerations are implicated in the feeling of disillusionment and the belief that one has no future within a system which has been discriminatory in the past (Tran 1979; Mai 1983).

Hong Kong as a Refugee Area

Local Resources

In 1946 Hong Kong had a population of 1.5 million. Due in part to immigration from the People's Republic of China, this population had grown to 5 million in 1983. The first surge of immigration into the British Crown Colony came in the late 1940s and early 1950s when the Republic was first established. The second great influx came in 1962 when the Republic faced serious economic and agricultural problems. Since 1978 mainland Chinese have arrived in large numbers due to the relaxation of travel restrictions by their government and the drawing power of higher standards of living in Hong Kong. Many can join kin and so are more easily absorbed, but the number of immigrants has strained the resources of Hong Kong. More than a million arrived in the first two waves. The number arriving since 1962 is difficult to estimate, but during 1981-1983 alone

Hong Kong received some 250,000 legal and illegal immigrants from the Republic.

The Crown Colony of Hong Kong covers a mere 1,059 square kilometers. Overall population density is 4,487 persons to the square kilometer, but on Hong Kong Island and in Kowloon and Tsuen Wan, where most of the population is concentrated, density rises to 25,400 per square kilometer. Facilities for medical and other social services are overstrained. Housing is a major problem. In 1971 about one-third of the population lived in public or publicly subsidized housing. In 1980 this had risen to about 40%, but more than a million people remained inadequately housed in huts or old overcrowded tenements.

The Influx of Refugees from Vietnam

Refugees from Vietnam first arrived in significant numbers in May 1975 when a Danish freighter reached the harbor with 3,800 refugees rescued from the South China Sea. At short notice camps were set up with the expectation that these would be temporary transit centers from which the refugees would be rapidly resettled overseas. Movement out of the camps, however, was slow, and the last of the 1975 arrivals did not leave until mid-1978. Meantime, new refugees arrived. In 1976 and 1977, some 1,200 came as boat people, but another 9,000 Vietnamese, Cambodians, and Laotians of Chinese ethnic origin arrived by other routes. Some came in chartered planes sent to Vietnam to evacuate 4,500 who had close kin in Hong Kong. By the end of 1977 Hong Kong had received more than 14,000 Southeast Asian refugees. Some, who could go to close kin in Hong Kong, never experienced camp life.

In 1978 boat arrivals markedly increased. In the second half of the year the government took alarm and adopted policies to discourage further refugees from heading for Hong Kong and deter rescue ships from landing them in Hong Kong. In part it feared that the Vietnamese government was planning to evict all ethnic Chinese or force them to flee. They had been defined as second-class citizens which made them subject to dismissal from jobs and liable to be sent to "Economic Zones," while their businesses were being suppressed and their property confiscated. As a result 80% of those arriving in Hong Kong by boat in 1978 were of Chinese ethnic origin. To stop the flow, the Hong Kong Legislative Council amended the Merchant Shipping Ordinance to introduce heavy penalties against ships that brought unauthorized passengers to Hong Kong.

Nevertheless, the influx of refugees continued. In January 1979 more than 2,000 arrived by small boats to join the 5,391 Vietnamese already in the camps in Hong Kong. That same month only 314 departed for resettlement. The number began to increase again in March, and in May the number of those trying to enter Hong Kong illegally, either by sea or along the land border, reached a daily average of 465. By mid-May Hong Kong housed 30,000 refugees from Vietnam while departures of those accepted for resettlement in Europe, Australia, and North America were down to a trickle.

By late 1979 Hong Kong had set up 12 camps or centers: 8 in Kowloon, 3 in the New Territories, and 1 on Hong Kong Island. Four, all in Kowloon, were under the control of the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). These were staffed by employees of various charitable relief organizations such as the Red Cross, Caritas, the International Rescue Committee, the Salvation Army, Save the Children Fund, the Christian Missionary Alliance, and the Hong Kong Christian Service. The remaining 8 camps were run by the Hong Kong government. One, which could hold more than 12,000 people, was at the Government Dockyard in Canton Road. This was managed by staff of the Correctional Service Department and treated as a transit center where refugee boats reached their journey's end on release from the Western Quarantine Anchorage. Refugees could expect to spend 2 to 3 weeks in this camp while they were given medical examinations and inoculations, were listed, and initially processed by the immigration staff. The camp was a closed camp. Refugees were not allowed to leave it until they were cleared to move on to one of the other eleven camps.

These other camps were "open." Refugees were free to come and go and encouraged to find jobs and become partially self-supporting while they awaited acceptance by a host country. Meantime, processing continued as the staff of UNHCR worked with representatives of potential host countries to find them a permanent home. Interviews were arranged by consular officers and courses for basic language instruction were set up since knowledge of the host language was required for acceptance. Once accepted by a host country, refugees entered a third stage during which many returned to the camp at Government Dockyard to await departure.

The presence of the refugees laid a heavy financial burden on the government of Hong Kong despite the assistance given by UNHCR and other international organizations. Direct costs of goods and services at the beginning of 1979 was about $65 million in Hong Kong dollars (US $13 million). By the end of the year direct costs had risen

to about $72 million. Indirect costs included the use of valuable land and other resources. The government believed that it was bearing an unfair share of the burden of the flight from Southeast Asia, because other countries of first asylum received greater assistance from the international community, and ultimate hosts were showing reluctance to speed immigration. Although Hong Kong received about 35% of all boat people landed in Southeast Asia, it was awarded only 12% of the places offered by potential host countries. Only 600 people were leaving its camps each month, whereas Malaysia with fewer refugees was sending out 3,000.

In May 1979 the British Prime Minister, Margaret Thatcher, responded to the concerns of the Hong Kong government by calling for an international conference on the future of the boat people. The governor of Hong Kong, Sir Murray MacLehose, warned the international community that if nothing effective was done to stem the tide of refugees and absorb those already in the camps, the patience of the countries of first refuge could snap, with dangerous results. The Secretary General of the United Nations then summoned an international conference at which various countries pledged support for a worldwide resettlement program, each agreeing to take a given number of refugees (see Lacey, this volume; Lau 1985). One month later the Vietnamese government also promised to take steps to discourage the illegal departure of its citizens.

By this time, August 1979, the camps in Hong Kong held a total of 66,038 people. Despite the various pledges, the numbers continued to grow. The influx peaked in 1980 and 1981 with 71,451 and 74,748 arrivals; in 1983 only 44,049 arrived. Outflow continued to be slow: Britain by 1982 no longer offered resettlement to Vietnamese refugees, Australia accepted only a few, and the United States and Canada decreased their quotas by one third and one half (Refugees 1982 9:8; Lee 1982). Then the Hong Kong Government, like other countries in Southeast Asia, decided to get tough. On July 2, 1982 it implemented a new policy whereby all Vietnamese refugees who arrived in Hong Kong after that date would be detained in closed camps, from which they might be repatriated if the opportunity arose (Refugees 1982 9:8; Lau 1985). This parallels what was happening at the same time in Thailand where that government was creating closed camps for Laotian refugees who crossed its border to encourage repatriation (Lacey, this volume).

Those who arrived after July 2, 1982 were placed in closed camps where they could not be visited by other Vietnamese or by Hong Kong relatives, and they could not leave camp without special authorization.

They were not permitted to seek work. They could expect to remain in the camp unless some host country accepted them or they agreed to return to Vietnam. As of early 1985 only 14 had agreed to repatriation (Lau 1985). Newly arrived boat people were given a choice on landing in Hong Kong: they could stay as inmates of a closed camp or they could go back to sea with a new supply of food and water to seek another haven. In July 1983 I saw reports in the Hong Kong newspapers that a boatload of 17 people had vanished after choosing the second alternative.

The closed camps in 1983 were Chi Ma Wan and Hui Ling Chan on the island of Lan Tau. Both were run by the Correctional Service Department, and UNHCR had no say in their management. Chi Ma Wan had been a prison but in 1983 it was given over to 3,300 refugees, a third of whom were children. Hui Ling Chan still served as a prison for young offenders and drug addicts, but a few buildings housed single male refugees. They lived with the common prisoners and shared their life. The only difference was that they wore civilian clothes (Billard 1983:21-22). Only about 5% of the 3,800 people living in the two closed camps in early March 1983 had been accepted by a country of resettlement. Four times as many had applications pending and were living in hope of acceptance. Under existing conditions the remainder (75%) had no hope of a new life (Barton 1983:3).

UNHCR has strongly condemned the effects of the closed camps, in Hong Kong and elsewhere. Dolores Lasan, Chief of the UNHCR Mission in Hong Kong, is reported as saying "the indefinite period of confinement in closed camps has had adverse effects on the refugees, leading to frustration and deviant behavior such as inter-group conflicts and hunger strikes" (Lau 1985:31). Understandably the Hong Kong government was extremely cautious about allowing scholars or journalists access to the closed camps. I was unable to visit either camp and have only hearsay information about conditions in them. I was told that camp authorities were concerned about increasing violence. North and South Vietnamese had polarized into two factions, and camp police had discovered weapons made from toothbrushes and other materials. Inmates were also said to lead lives of boredom since few social activities were available to them. This was in line with the government's goal of making living conditions sufficiently uncomfortable so that word would get back to Vietnam that Hong Kong was not a good destination.

The Hong Kong government reported the policy as successful, in that in the first 5 months of 1983 there was a 57% reduction in the number of arrivals (Refugees 1983 20:3). Vietnamese in the open

camps who spoke with me doubted that the policy would have much effect on the flow of refugees. They said that people left because they were driven to leave and so the flow to nearby Hong Kong would continue until the Vietnamese government changed its domestic policies.

Between the end of 1979 and August 1983 approximately 140,000 Vietnamese had been processed through the Hong Kong camps and left for new homes. In 1983 only two open camps remained: Jubilee Center and Kai Tak Transit Center (described by Stone and McGowan 1980:56-60). Their residents, with the exception of the unaccompanied children, had arrived prior to July 1982. They could come and go as they pleased so long as they were back in camp before 10 p.m. Many worked in factories outside the camp to support themselves and their families. The Kai Tak Center had 4,000 refugees who were mainly ethnic Chinese, while the 2,000 residents in Jubilee Center were ethnic Vietnamese. All save some of the unaccompanied children had experienced at least 1 year of camp life when I began my research in Jubilee Center.

An Open Camp and its People

Research Methodology

When I decided to conduct research on Vietnamese refugee camps in Hong Kong during the summer of 1983, I did not know if I could get access to any camp. Nevertheless, before leaving for Hong Kong in June 1983 I had decided that if possible I would examine how such camps were organized and administered and try to discover what kind of refugees were arriving from Vietnam in 1983. In Berkeley I had been able to find little published material dealing with either camps or recent arrivals. Vietnamese whom I knew in San Francisco had left Vietnam in the 1970s and many said that they would not welcome the latecomers. I also hoped through learning about the background and expectations of the migrants of the 1980s to come to a better understanding of Vietnamese socialism.

On arriving in Hong Kong I spent two weeks trying to obtain official permission to enter one of the camps. I soon understood why so few studies of refugee camps exist: the government in the country of first asylum is likely to be cautious about letting social scientists or journalists into its camps to prevent criticism of the way the camps are run. After many interviews I was given permission to visit the two open camps located in the New Territories but was denied entry

to the closed camps which house all adults who reached Hong Kong after July 1982. I had to promise the local director of UNHCR that I would not ask questions about the governance of the camps and that the UNHCR staff in the camps should decide how frequently I might visit. After two visits to each camp I decided to work in the one that offered me the most freedom of movement. This was Jubilee Transit Center. I also chose to work there because it was populated by people of Vietnamese ethnic background and it was among such people that I had worked in San Francisco. I was given an identity card to use as a gate pass, but the guard soon knew me and let me through each day.

I spent 6 days each week in the camp for the next 6 weeks. Only during the last two weeks did the camp staff begin to ask probing questions about what I was doing, my extended interviews with various refugees, and the friendships I had begun to form.

Each day I spent two hours taking lessons in Vietnamese with a 25-year-old man who had no job and was willing to help me improve my Vietnamese if I helped him to improve his English. This was one point of entry into the camp. The lesson completed, I spent the rest of the day venturing through the camp to interview as many people as possible. In all I had intensive interviews with 17 adults (15 men and 2 women), less detailed interviews with another 12 adults (9 men and 3 women), and interviews of varying length with 15 children (12 boys and 3 girls). Women were less likely to speak English and they were often busy with domestic work and unwilling to take time to be interviewed. In contrast men were more articulate and had more time to talk. In addition to the interviews with Vietnamese, I also interviewed all members of the staff working in the camp, and did a good deal of observation.

The size of the camp made it feasible to study it as a small community, but the sanitary conditions and crush of people made fieldwork physically difficult. The summer was hot. In the refugee quarters there was little ventilation. Many rooms had no access to outside light and the 9-voltage bulbs made it difficult to read. I spent a great deal of time with the unaccompanied children who were friendly and wanted to include me in their world. With them I learned that even those who live under abominable conditions can dream about a world of fantasies and hope for a better future.

Physical Environment of Jubilee Camp

Jubilee was located in Sham Shui Po, a working-class neighborhood on the Kowloon side of the Bay. Like most areas of Hong Kong,

Sham Shui Po was densely populated. The camp occupied an old military base situated near the pier facing the bay. It was surrounded by a fence which closely encircled the buildings and was flanked on one side by a fish market and on the other by a pig butchery, the source of a pervasive stench. It consisted of two buildings, divided into many small rooms, which provided minimal space for the 2,000 people who lived there. Ventilation was bad. Many rooms had little light. The absence of trees exposed the buildings to bright sunlight throughout the day so that rooms became extremely hot. Nevertheless, each room had an altar where candles burned throughout the day.

Seven or eight families might be assigned to a single room, depending on the size of the room. They tried to obtain some privacy by building platforms which could be curtained off. Platforms were usually 6 feet square, set on 5-foot posts, and screened by cloth. Each family had its platform which it used for storage and sleeping and where it often gathered to eat.

The camp was dirty. For the needs of 2,000 people, water supplies and sanitation were inadequate, consisting of 25 outside water taps and 30 latrines and showers. Nevertheless, middle-class refugees usually blamed the filth on those who had been fishermen in Vietnam and were said to follow their old sanitary practices in the unfamiliar cramped urban conditions. At night garbage was thrown from the windows and by the morning the place looked like a dump. Small children roamed around without diapers and defecated where they pleased. Food was left on the floor, exposed to the flies which haunted the camp. It was a wonder that under such conditions so many refugees kept themselves clean.

The government of Hong Kong was opposed to any attempts to improve camp amenities, since it wished the camp to be seen as a very temporary holding center. This led to conflict with the staff in the camp: a suggestion that a recreation room be created led to endless discussions between the camp director and the Hong Kong authorities.

Camp Organization and Services

In many respects the camp was organized as a small self-sufficient community. The school and other facilities were staffed by a few non-refugee employees representing the sponsoring agencies assisted by a number of refugees hired in the camp. The Hong Kong government provided a post office, a grocery store, and a few other

facilities. Refugee entrepreneurs had set up a beauty shop, a tailor shop, and several small eating establishments. The various services did not appeal to everyone. The child-care center, set up to release young mothers to find factory work, was little patronized because the Vietnamese believed that women with young children should stay home with them. The school, on the other hand, was much used. It took care of the education of the many children. It also offered a great many English classes taught by English-speaking teachers. These were well patronized by adults who knew that they must have some proficiency in English if they were to be accepted by English-speaking host countries.

In large part, however, attendance was a symbolic gesture towards the future. Few became fluent in English, and these were likely to come from the minority of the camp residents who were from middle-class backgrounds in Vietnam. Those who had found work in factories were learning Cantonese to communicate with fellow workers, rather than English, and after 8 hours of factory work, while struggling to use Cantonese, they were not willing to spend much time studying English. After a year of classes, those who attended still knew little English. The children housed in the "non-accompanied minor" quarter of the camp were much more fluent. Because they were bored and had little to do in camp, they spent a great deal of time watching TV and learned more English in this fashion than in school. Women with small children were least likely to learn English since their obligation to stay with their children kept them from attending night classes.

Upon arrival in the camp, refugees had received a month's food rations. They were expected to find a factory job during that month and thereafter to support themselves and their families. Those unable to work because of illness or injury were provided with food by the UNHCR. Finding a factory job was said to have been fairly easy due to the efficiency of the refugee network, and one was usually found within a few weeks of arrival. Workers received HK $50 (the equivalent of US $8) per day, the average wage for an unskilled worker. On this they could feed and clothe themselves and their families and begin to accumulate a few possessions—indeed, economically, they may have been better off than non-refugee factory workers since they did not have to pay rent. Nevertheless, they felt insecure since they were not accepted as immigrants by the Hong Kong government.

A few refugees managed to earn a living within the camp as employees of the management or by setting up small businesses, such

as informal diners patronized by those who had no one to cook for them. One diner I visited was managed by a husband while his wife cooked. Some women ran tiny trading ventures, dealing in the resale of cigarettes, candies, cakes, and lemonade, and usually operated them at night when they set out their goods in the hallways of the camp buildings.

One of the first items bought with earnings was a suitcase. It served to store clothing, but it also had a symbolic value, for it looked forward to the next move. It reminded people that the camp existence was only temporary. Workers also looked forward to being able to save enough money to buy the goods that symbolized the life they desired which was no longer available to them in Vietnam: stereo equipment, cameras, and jewels. But all of these would be transportable when they moved on. They had left Vietnam in search of a better life for themselves and their families as well as to escape political oppression (Tran 1979; Mai 1983). The right to buy what they wanted gave them a sense of freedom. Despite their difficulties in Hong Kong, they saw themselves as having acquired a chance to begin to control their own lives. Such solace, of course, was not open to the refugees placed in the closed camps.

The Residents and Their Adjustment to Limbo

The majority of the residents at Jubilee Center were fishermen from Da Nang, many of whom had fled in their own boats, bringing families with them. Hong Kong was probably the preferred country of settlement for many of them. They quickly found jobs in nearby factories, learned Cantonese, and spent little time studying English. They spoke of a hope of being accepted for resettlement overseas, but their real adjustment was to Hong Kong where they were not welcome as permanent immigrants. They had little chance of being accepted by a host country, however, since they were not learning English, had little technical training, and were unlikely to have friends or kin who had already found acceptance overseas. They also had less likelihood of making good the claim to political refugee status, which is crucial for acceptance.

The minority of residents who were of middle-class background had a better chance of finding a host country, because they were more likely to have the kind of background that would lead to political persecution at home. They also were most likely to have relatives already settled in Western countries who provided them with financial and moral support, and could sponsor them for immigration once resident

status was achieved. They therefore did little to relate to Hong Kong, preferring to work in the camp in jobs which gave them greater opportunity to improve their English, though the pay was less than factory pay, or they relied on funds sent them by kin to support themselves while they studied. The majority of those whom I interviewed intensively came from this group. They said the camp was acceptable to them as a transit place, but they did not want to stay beyond a year. In the summer of 1983, that year was already over.

There was much to remind both groups that life in the camp was uncertain and impermanent, and the future was not in their own hands. They had little input in the choice of a permanent home: the choice would be made by the representatives of host countries. Manh, a 45-year-old man, wanted to go to England with his wife and two younger children to join two children who had left Vietnam two years earlier. His application had been twice refused. He could apply for entry to Australia, where he had a better chance of acceptance, but refused because he was afraid he would never see his children again. He had been in the camp for two years, but was determined to wait on the hope that someday the family would be reunited in England. While it was difficult for families to be reunited, new relationships people created in the camp gave even less promise of permanency. Many of the refugees were men who had left wives and children behind in Vietnam. In the camp some became the lovers of young women who had come alone or with relatives. The lovers were not able to marry. If a child was born, the father might acknowledge it, but the couple and their child did not count as a family unit for resettlement purposes. If either was accepted as an immigrant, this meant separation and there was uncertainty about the future of the child. Even single refugees found it difficult to enter into a legal marriages in the camp because they could not prove that they had not left a spouse behind in Vietnam.

All new relationships formed in camp therefore were seen as transitory, no matter how important they were in replacing kin and friends left behind in Vietnam. Friendships, like love affairs, were burdened by the knowledge that the friends might soon be separated through resettlement. The departure of a friend increased the anxiety of those left behind. Hai, for example, was depressed for two weeks when his best friend left for Australia. He explained this as due to the fact that he was waiting for an interview with an American official which even if successful gave him no hope that he would ever see his friend again, for "I do not know if I would ever have enough money to visit him in Australia."

For the refugees, life in camp meant waiting for a departure date whose timing could not be predicted, while they could only regard the ties formed with camp-mates as ephemeral. Like prisoners whose freedom is restrained, they lived with their past and dreamt of the future. They often said, "We have no rights and no status. We are the unwanted." Their lives revolved around waiting: for interviews, for news of their families in Vietnam or relatives already resettled in another country, to see the list of boat people arriving in Hong Kong, and for word that they had been approved for immigration. There can be no doubt that they found this stressful. In the 12 months previous to my field work, 5 young men died without apparent cause—they went to sleep and never woke. The doctors attributed this to the psychological stresses created by the living conditions in the camp. The other refugees found the deaths extremely disturbing and their morale for weeks afterward gave evidence of their insecurity. But even in normal times, they showed little interest in the camp as a community and concerned themselves primarily with what was happening to themselves and their immediate family. They looked upon themselves as existing in a state of limbo. The camp staff complained to me about the refugees' lack of willingness to participate in efforts to improve the living conditions in the camp, and said they were like dependent children rather than responsible adults in their reliance on the staff to meet their needs.

The Unaccompanied Children

A special feature of Jubilee Camp was a quarter for unaccompanied children who ranged in age from 8 to 14. Such children were of special concern to UNHCR which by 1982 had had to deal with approximately 2,400 Vietnamese children classed as unaccompanied minors (Refugees 1982 8:3). Those living in Jubilee Camp had arrived both before and after the creation of the closed camps in mid-1982. Their parents or guardians had sent them away in the hope that they would be accepted by a host country where they would have a better chance for education and so that later their families would be given preference for immigration. Host countries who had come to understand the strategy became reluctant to accept such children who were seen as the forefront of a new immigration. After 1981 their resettlement moved at a slow pace. They often spent over a year in camp before being placed.

These children even more than the adults, seemed to be suspended in a world that made little sense to them. Unlike the

adults, they had not chosen to leave Vietnam. Many did not understand the nature of their exile. They were being sent to relatives whom they did not know and who lived in unknown circumstances. The children were torn between the desire to go home to Vietnam and the excitement of going to America, which they called "the land of freedom." They understood that they had been sent away because of "communism" and although they understood little of what this meant, they wanted to share the ideology of their parents. One child told me that he would never question his parents' faith no matter what happened and he would not disappoint them. All said that unless the communists left Vietnam they would never be able to go home.

In the camp they created their own small world, a children's community, but like the adults they knew this was only temporary. They lived in their own quarter nominally under the care of a supervisor and several Vietnamese assistants. At the age of 8 they were expected to be strong and behave as adults. They felt responsible for themselves and for each other. They helped to keep their quarter clean, did the laundry, and washed dishes. Half the day they spent in school. The rest of the time they were in their quarter or wandered the streets of Kowloon learning about Chinese life.

Friendships played an important role in their lives and they thought of friends as forming a special kind of family which they could call upon if in trouble. Yet they realized that this family would disperse when its members left Hong Kong. Those who were told they would soon be leaving to join kin in America or Australia faced this as another breaking away from people they loved, even though they were excited at the thought of the journey.

Meantime the long stay in camp had a negative impact. The children missed their families very much. They were bored, especially since they spent only half a day in school. Some spent much of their time sleeping or otherwise withdrew and refused to communicate with others. These children had learned little English and had little interest in learning. Others responded to the absence of adult authority by becoming very independent, so independent that they would have problems when finally resettled in families with adult members.

These children came from middle-class professional backgrounds. Hai, a 14-year-old boy, left Vietnam in 1982 with an older brother, leaving his parents, two brothers, and two sisters in Vietnam. His father, a university professor, told Hai he must leave to get an education and that he had no future under communism. Hai said his father would welcome him home only when the government was overthrown. Trang, a year older, had also been sent away by his

father. His mother was a doctor working in a hospital, but his father, who was a radio technician, had been unable to find work after 1975. His older brother had been expelled from a university and was unable to find a job. Duc, 14 years old, was the son of another university professor who had been sent to a reeducation camp in 1975 and died shortly after his release in 1978. Duc's mother then became mentally ill and was sent to a psychiatric hospital. Duc's two older brothers, one a high school teacher and the other still a student, then decided that Duc must leave. He left with much resentment and said he hated the communists for destroying his family.

Other children had fathers who had served in the South Vietnamese Army and were sent to reeducation camps after the fall of that government. Later they could find work only as fishermen or farm laborers. They wanted their children to have a better future, and they also saw the exiled child as a means for obtaining resettlement for the whole family. Since immigration policies in host countries favor the applications of the parents and children of those already resident, this was not an unrealistic hope.

In Limbo in Vietnam

Many of those I interviewed saw the interval of camp life as a continuation of what they had already experienced in Vietnam. Although the proximate causes that led to their flight differed, all saw themselves as having been endangered in some way and expelled from normal existence. They might have been endangered because they refused to serve in the army, because they had kin who had gone to the United States, because they had kin who had served the South Vietnamese government, or because of their religion. The six accounts that follow are representative cases.

All young Vietnamese men were expected to serve in the army. Those who refused to serve lost their identity cards and their jobs. They then went into hiding until they could escape the country. If found by the police, they were sent to labor camps or prisons. Tuan was 25 years old in 1983. He completed a 3-year engineering course at the University of Da Nang in 1979 and was required to do his army service before taking a job. He refused and went into hiding. Although he could not work without an identity card, his family supplied him with money during his three years in hiding before he escaped to Hong Kong. Chong, also 25, trained as an electrician after finishing high school and then worked at a radio station for a year

before being summoned for army service. When he refused, he lost his identity card and job. During the next two years he hid himself in Da Nang, living on his savings.

Van, on the other hand, claimed to have been persecuted because his father had gone to the United States. His father, who had worked for a South Vietnamese intelligence unit, left for the United States in 1975 and wanted his family to accompany him. They refused because none of them felt threatened by the new regime. Then Van's mother was sent to prison for a year, and his two brothers were expelled from high school and not permitted to take jobs. Van, who was at a university, escaped notice because the authorities did not connect him with his family. His mother and siblings avoided any mention of him. He never went home, although he met his mother secretly, choosing a different restaurant or library for each meeting. After he graduated, he found a job teaching high school. Unfortunately, when the family house was confiscated in 1981, the police found an old family picture and were alerted to his existence. They began a search and eventually found him by following his mother. Van lost his job and was placed under house arrest for three years. Three times a day he was visited by a member of the Red Brigade to whom he had to report everything he did. After a year he decided to escape. He had married his high school sweetheart, and her father planned and paid for the escape. Van said he had never been interested in political matters and had been unwilling to leave Vietnam, but he knew he had no future there under the present government.

Ha, a 26-year-old woman, suffered also for her connection to the United States, but in her case it was because three of her brothers were in that country. After finishing high school, she trained as a primary school teacher and then taught for a year and a half. Her younger brother, who was living with a friend, then refused to do his military service. One day Ha was confronted by the police who accused her of having kin in the United States and told her to turn in her younger brother. When she refused, she lost her job. She and her brother escaped several months later.

Catholicism was also said to be a grounds for suspicion. Zam, 26 years old, was able to finish his medical training and find work at a hospital, probably because his officer father had retired before 1975. Although Zam had not been penalized because of his father's career or his religion, he was convinced that sooner or later he and his family would suffer because they were Catholics. He was the first of the family to leave, but he hoped the rest would soon join him.

Those whose families had links with the former Saigon regime were likely to be sent to the Economic Zones instituted by the Vietnam government after 1975. Nam, 24 years old and the son of a former civil servant, had been able to finish training at the Forestry College in Da Nang, but then was sent to an Economic Zone in a remote part of the country. During the three years he was there he was allowed to see his mother only once every two months although fellow workers could visit their families every weekend. While working near a fishing community, he managed to escape. His sister who had trained as a doctor was also sent to an Economic Zone where she still remained in 1983.

Many of the other men in Jubilee Camp, including the fishermen, had been soldiers in the South Vietnamese army before 1975 and then sent to reeducation camps. Afterwards they found work only as fishermen or farm laborers, and this led them to leave the country. Those who could left with their families, while the others hoped that their families would eventually join them.

Thus these men and women had spent several years of what they regarded as suspended life before they escaped to Hong Kong to face the further intermission of camp life. For much of their youth and adult life, they had known only uncertainty, insecurity, and a sense of being unwanted by the larger community.

Conclusion

The dilemmas faced by the Hong Kong government and the refugees in its camps are not unique. They bedevil hosts and refugees throughout the world. An increasing number of refugees are now spending years in camps set up as holding devices with little relationship to the kind of life people must lead if and when they ultimately find a new home. After its experiences with refugees uprooted during or immediately after World War II, the UNHCR emphasized that experience in refugee camps has a negative impact upon people and their ability to adapt to a new society. It recommended that the international community find means to speed permanent resettlement. Since then both the number of refugees and the number of camps have increased and camps have become permanent holding centers for many who cannot go home and are not acceptable elsewhere.

Why countries of first asylum provide only temporary and uncomfortable refuge and why refugees respond as they do can be understood only with reference to the particular historical cir-

cumstances of each country and the motivations that lie behind the mass movements of people. The Hong Kong government was reluctant to become responsible for any large number of Vietnamese refugees given the fact that it was also having to cope with an influx of immigrants from the People's Republic of China. Its policies toward the newly arriving Vietnamese reflected both its strained resources and fear of further influx. It also recognized that those who left in the 1980s were no longer fleeing in panic fear for their lives, though they might face persecution at home and have left Vietnam because they thought they had no future under the new regime.

The refugees thought of themselves as having been expelled from the Vietnamese mainstream and denied freedom of action. With nothing to lose, as they saw it, they escaped to find a better life. They viewed the camp as a transit period in their progress toward this new life and accepted unpleasant camp conditions as part of the escape. Although acceptance for permanent resettlement was slow in coming, enough left so that hope survived and those still in the camp could bear the present as only a time of waiting. But, while they waited, they remained in transitory status, with expectations dimming (Bruce 1979:162).

The unaccompanied children, unlike the adults, had little sense that they had achieved a goal by reaching the camp. They had had no say in their own departure from Vietnam. In the camp they lived under conditions which separated them from their past but did not prepare them for a future. They tried to rationalize the political games of adults without understanding their meaning. The camp taught them to be independent and freed them from social constraints exerted by adults, but gave them no choice about their future. They adjusted by finding strength in the community of children. But it was questionable how they would adapt when eventually they reached an unfamiliar country and kin whom they had never met. How would they cope with adult authority? What would they become as adults?

For adults the camp was a continuation of a long process of alienation which had started in Vietnam before they made their escape into the international refugee system. For children, the camp was a radical break with the past. The camp itself fostered in neither adults nor children any sense that they were now actively working towards a future which they themselves could determine.

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3

Keeping Refugee Status: A Tibetan Perspective

Dorsh Marie de Voe

Introduction

For those who have become refugees, keeping refugee status is usually not an option. In countries where it is, few refugee groups choose to remain in this status because of the comparative disadvantage noncitizens experience. In India, for example, a refugee as noncitizen or "foreigner" is unable to purchase land or housing, travels within the country only with special police authorization, and may have difficulty obtaining employment outside of the refugee community. For strictly instrumental reasons, then, most refugees prefer the citizenship of their host nation.

In contemporary times, however, several refugee groups have willfully maintained refugee status for at least two decades, e.g., the Palestinians and the Tibetans. This paper is about Tibetans in India, most of whom live in refugee status twenty-five years after they fled their homeland. It is based on fieldwork in several Tibetan refugee areas of India in 1977-78 and 1980-82. After a brief introduction to Tibetans as refugees, I focus on a) Tibetan relations with their host country, India, and b) the economic organization of resettlement. Tibetan identity, I argue herein, has been reinforced in exile because of mutually acceptable boundaries between Indian and Tibetan societies. Tibetans are able to survive refugee life because of the net-

work of donors actively engaged in resettlement work and committed to Tibetans *as* Tibetans. The psychosocial consequences of living as long-term refugees are discussed vis-à-vis contemporary Tibetan identity.

Background to Tibetans as Refugees

Tibet, situated due north of India above Nepal and southwest of China, was a theocratic Buddhist society historically governed by a succession of Dalai Lamas (literally, "Ocean of Wisdom"). Relations between the Tibetan government and the Chinese Empire had been delicate for centuries. As early as 1910, the Dalai Lama, anticipating dangerous Chinese encroachment, sought temporary refuge in India. After 1949, when the Chinese People's Republic was established, Tibetans experienced innumerable aggressive acts by the Chinese, who intended to establish territorial control over Tibet which they claimed had always been a part of China.

By 1959, the Chinese were successful. Resistance against the Chinese by the Tibetan militia, called *Chu-she Gang-druk* ("Four Rivers, Six Ranges"), began to weaken. After an unusually dramatic demonstration by Tibetans who feared for their leader, the Fourteenth Dalai Lama, he and a small group of advisors clandestinely fled, risking the arduous trans-Himalayan journey for shelter in neighboring India. Nearly 90,000 Tibetans followed suit in the next few months.

From the temporary transit camps in the Assam and West Bengal border areas, Tibetan refugees were transferred to road construction sites in the mountainous Himalayan region of northern India, where they lived in tents which skirted the roads they cleared. Tibetans recall that even then they thought asylum was temporary, that it was a matter of weeks before they would return to Tibet. But by 1960, consultation between the Dalai Lama and a sympathetic Prime Minister Nehru resulted in plans for a more permanent arrangement in Indian states which would accept Tibetans in resettlement projects.

Since that time, there has been a striking development of Tibetan communities in India. There are thirteen large farming settlements, nine industrial settlements, and one largely Tibetan town in which the Tibetan government-in-exile and the Dalai Lama reside. Cultural preservation establishments include a performing arts institute, Tibetan library and archives, Tibetan medical training school and hospital, several Tibetan residential schools, and over one hundred Tibetan Buddhist monasteries and temples.

Tibetan Relations with Their Hosts

In the 1980s Tibetans appear settled in India. A nation with a pluralistic philosophy which accommodates its own diverse ethnic and cultural groups, India has held a consistent policy of "live and let live" with its Tibetan refugee population. Instances of interethnic conflict in the past twenty-five years are rare; Tibetans tend to live in harmony with their Hindu, Sikh, and Muslim neighbors alike. To date, Tibetan refugees and their children born in India are allowed to keep their stateless identity "yellow" papers rather than take Indian citizenship. In sharp contrast, neighboring Bhutan recently demanded that Tibetans accept citizenship as a sign of allegiance. Thousands chose to seek out a second country of asylum rather than relinquish their Tibetan papers. For the Tibetan, the refugee paper is expressive of a cultural, ethnic, and national identity, an allegiance to the past, and a candid avowal of dedication to Tibet's future freedom. While their houses in the settlement areas are often more durable than the mud-brick houses of many Indians, Tibetans rather typically dwell within out of suitcases and metal boxes, graphically symbolizing their feeling of transience and readiness to return to their homeland at a moment's notice.

For the most part, Tibetans have always lived enclaved in exclusively Tibetan settlements. Such a resettlement plan was agreed upon by both Indian and Tibetan authorities who in the early 1960s felt that the refugees would derive moral strength from living in Tibetan communities which, as in old Tibet, were oriented around the temple.

In a land of scarce resources, the influx of Tibetans was potentially a cause of conflict with thousands of destitute rural Indians who were over the years to witness much international refugee aid given the Tibetans. But, in the 1960s, when Tibetans were moved from transit camps and road work areas into settlements, the available land was viewed as worthless jungle of little utility to local Indians. One example of this was a malaria-infested area in southern India which had previously been abandoned by Partition refugees who left rather than risk the odds in this disease-ridden jungle (Palakshappa 1978:5). When offered to them, the Tibetans took it. Years later, it became a thriving Tibetan farming community.

The Tibetan presence in several undeveloped areas of India in fact often created new and beneficial resources in those areas due to the services provided by several Western relief agencies. Applying their own standards of development to the relocation effort, these

agencies, under the guidance of the Indian Central Relief Committee, brought water, health care, modern farm technology and equipment, experimental industry, and educational facilities to rural areas not yet undergoing development. Thus, local Indians share the use of water taps dotting Tibetan camps. Indians are routinely accepted as clients in all of the settlements' medical clinics. Farming settlements in particular have provided planting and harvesting employment opportunities for Indian seasonal labor. And too, Indian-owned and operated businesses, such as tea stalls, food and commodity shops, and cloth stores have grown up around settlements to cater to Tibetan consumer needs. Elsewhere Goldstein (1978) has illustrated how resource competition between Tibetans and Indians was virtually eliminated because of the Dalai Lama's efforts to restrict Tibetan refugee bazaar activity in a way that their economic endeavors did not interfere with those traditionally Indian. Though often financially successful in India, Tibetan refugees remain marginal and unthreatening to most local Indians. This marginality, I would submit, gives the Tibetan exiles the leeway to forge their own community around their leader and religion, with little diversion from the original purpose of flight—to defend the faith, and in the end, rescue the people left behind in Tibet.

Economic Organization of Refugee Life

In old Tibet, sponsorship was an integral part of Tibetan social, economic, and religious life. There were two main systems, feudal and patron-priest, in which giving, receiving, and returning took place. Essentially, the Tibetan household and local economies relied on networks of exchange, "a web of interlocking claims and obligations between the giver and the recipient" (Ekvall 1964:156-7). It is very clear that lay offerings, for example, were essential for the monastical community to survive, and hence served an important, sanctified social function. The act of offering was, moreover, a value bluntly correlated with one's prestige.

Though Tibetans usually lived with rigidly defined, ascribed social status, there is some evidence that great donors achieved social recognition for their generosity. Even in exile, the public is witness to gifts given. Every religious *puja* or festival must be underwritten by the devout. A wealthy Tibetan may sponsor the entire event; or, each of several families may contribute to it. In the latter case, donors' names are listed and read in order of amount given. The most

generous donor is in return given the privilege of receiving the first blessing bestowed by the presiding lama. While Tibetan refugees still compose the main body of donors or *sByin-bDag*s for patronizing their monasteries in India, Westerners now also engage in the process of donating financial aid for temple construction, individual monk training, and special teachings.

In exile, the rudimentary forms of gift giving practiced in old Tibet have survived, but on slightly altered terms. While religious patronage continues, now it is supplemented by the farm labor, sewing, selling, or concierge work individual lamas and nuns take on to contribute to their monastery's well-being. And sByin-bDags have taken on larger tasks and more comprehensive roles in the exile community.

With refugee status, Tibetans are still entitled to special attention and aid earmarked for those in the refugee category. The provision for management of Tibetan resettlement in India is possible to a large degree because of the long-term involvement of several Westerners, some of whom work for well-known relief agencies and others who raise funds through their ladies clubs or circle of friends. Many of the international relief agencies involved with Tibetans in the early 1960s are still administering and allocating food-for-work programs, sponsoring children's education, financing repairs on old-age homes they might have built years ago, or underwriting hospital equipment costs. Agency workers express a strong commitment to Tibetans, in part because they are refugees in a poor country, but moreover because the workers admire Tibetan conviction. In interviews with several donors working with Tibetans in India, three major themes emerged in their rationale for helping the Tibetans these many years: 1) they like Tibetans as people; 2) they appreciate Tibetan Buddhist spiritualism; and 3) they believe Tibetans have been victimized. Tibetans, in the donors' view, are deserving *and* likable, making them "better clients" than others who are eligible for the same aid.

A new use of the old concept sByin-bDag has appeared. In exile sByin-bDag is most often used as a label identifying a *Westerner* who in any way aids or supports the *ordinary* Tibetan. A sByin-bDag may sponsor a "semi-orphan" child by paying monthly school fees, or contribute to an emergency fund for Tibetan victims of a drought. He may be an agency worker involved in allocating agency funds for Tibetan projects. Or, he may be a friendly tourist who chanced upon a Tibetan area in India giving his clothing, sleeping bag, or backpack to his new Tibetan acquaintance.

Unlike other refugee groups, the driving force, the daily preoccupation of Tibetan refugee life has not been the quest for shelter, health, and general care: donor groups, much like sByin-bDags in old Tibet, have tended to such matters. Indeed, as one prominent Tibetan government-in-exile administrator recalled, Tibetans of the early refugee years had no idea that aid, relief, and social services even existed: "These were new concepts, new words, to us. These things just happened. People came seeking to provide, to give. Of course we were very grateful." Twenty-five years later, the Tibetan experience of donors is reminiscent of the early days of refuge: "Agencies have money to give, that they *have* to give. In a way, they are in a competition to find the best project," a Tibetan government worker observed. Said another, "The agencies need us." Freed from concern about how basic human survival would come, Tibetans had the advantage of being able to devote most of their efforts to the great task of remaining Tibetan in culture and community, and as individuals.

In exile, then, an unlikely alliance has developed between Tibetans hailing from a land long forbidden to all foreigners and literally thousands of Westerners who have in varying degrees committed themselves to help Tibetans sustain their culture and their religion while enduring the refugee context. The value of the support of Western donors extends beyond the economic: their donations have, from the Tibetan perspective, the quality of offerings sByin-bDags make, given in the spirit of belief, compassion, and encouragement for all that Tibetans in their refugee circumstances represent of and for old Tibet.

Tibetan Ideals and Identity After Twenty-Five Years in Exile

In refuge, Tibetan Buddhist cultural preservation and practice were in fact the raison d'etre. Over 30% of the Tibetan government-in-exile's budget is spent on religious institutions and training (Bureau of His Holiness the Dalai Lama 1969). Time and again the community leaders state that the reason for going into exile was, twenty-five years ago and is today, to preserve a way of life virtually destroyed by the Chinese takeover of Tibet. In the words of the Dalai Lama, "The main reason we are in exile is our concern for the welfare of six million Tibetans in Tibet" (His Holiness the Dalai Lama 1979:1). The Tibetan leadership's position is that the purpose of refugee life is to rescue the nation, the people, and the cultural traditions of Tibet.

Even Tibetan youth born in exile, when asked what they want to do with their lives, answer in deep sincerity and conviction, "We aim to be Tibetans."

The case of the Tibetan refugees in India may well be unique among contemporary migrants as a group which did not face repercussions from loss of leadership (Scudder and Colson 1982:270-1). Elsewhere I have argued that Tibetans are psychologically equipped to cope with refugee life because of a strong leadership which orchestrated resettlement as a period for cultural consolidation, reconstruction, and preservation in the face of probable cultural tampering and ethnic eradication in old Tibet (de Voe 1984). The Dalai Lama's own perception of refugee life is philosophically akin to the Tibetan Buddhist notion of the "refuge" one seeks for spiritual guidance and attainments: "Being a refugee has been very useful. You are much closer to reality. . . . I became a refugee. Very good. So there was a good opportunity to gain experience, and also determination and inner strength" (Avedon 1980:21). This perception, systematically organized in resettlement and individually felt by Tibetans as Buddhists, suggests the reflective aplomb with which Tibetans in exile live.

If Tibetans have indeed always been aware of their "rich and distinctive culture" (Ekvall 1960:375), they have had as refugees an opportunity to reminisce and record it, to reconstruct, reenact, and teach it. Guest registers in Tibetan hotels and institutions such as the Tibetan Library and Archives in Dharamsala, India are testimonials of the thousands who over the years have come from nations around the world seeking Tibetan medical cures, studying Tibetan culture, language or religion, researching Tibetan history, enjoying Tibetan dance and opera, finding a child to sponsor, volunteering services as doctors, architects, dentists, or teachers, or just meeting "real" Tibetans. While an estimated 5,000 Tibetans live in the Western world, the majority of them are actively involved, full or part time, with some aspect of Tibetan culture. Many come to the West as teachers of Tibetan Buddhism. Others tutor Westerners in Tibetan language, or show small audiences Tibetan folk dances. Nearly all Tibetans in Western countries have networks which link them with each other and with sympathetic Westerners in "friendship societies" which aim to preserve Tibetan culture and educate the general public about it.

The refugee context has provided a chance for Tibetans to experience themselves as unique, and to observe how widely sought after are the products and precepts of their religion and cultural heritage. Not only from within their community but from without, from

the non-Tibetan world, Tibetans have been encouraged to build institutions which communicate aspects of Tibetan culture. There are, for example, over one hundred Tibetan Buddhist dharma centers in Western Europe and North America, at least forty-five Tibetan art collections in U.S. museums alone, and holdings of old Tibetan religious texts in twenty-eight libraries.

Other indicators of cultural persistence are noticeable within the refugee community. Tibetans in India still wear the traditional dress, the *chu-bah*, even in southern areas where the heat makes it highly impractical. Men are more likely to wear western-style pants and shirts, a practice no doubt made convenient by the donations of second-hand clothing from western charities. Their chu-bahs are worn for religious and government events. Tibetan presence is known by the prayer flags and banners that are strung on trees or poles above housing clusters in Buddhist fashion. It is believed that the wind which makes them flutter spreads the well-wishing prayers, which are ink-blocked on them, to all sentient beings. Every Tibetan household, no matter how humble, has an altar with pictures of the Dalai Lama and other revered lamas and religious teachers, as well as offerings of fruit, biscuits, rice, curd, *chung*, or burning butter lamps. The oral tradition, storytelling, is still a common Tibetan pastime, along with a Tibetan dice game, *sho*, and majong. Tibetan is the sole language spoken within the household and in all religious, governmental, and social activities. While Tibetan youth tend to be trilingual (Tibetan, Hindi, English), they too use Tibetan in nearly all their interactions.

Even in overseas Tibetan communities, when Tibetans gather the language changes from German, French, English, or Italian to Tibetan. Many Tibetans settled in Europe and North America are concerned about the loss of fluency in Tibetan among their young children and devise methods to insure its use. One German Tibetan family reported that their two children must speak only Tibetan within the house or lose television and allowance privileges. Others make a game of their "secret" language which they can safely speak around their European acquaintances. Still others have decided to return their children to India so that they may be "raised Tibetan" in one of the residential schools where the emphasis is on careful teaching of Tibetan language, religion, and history, and where their children rub shoulders with their Tibetan peers. The Tibetan government-in-exile recently reached a consensus that Tibetan orphans would no longer be eligible for adoption by Western families until they were old enough to have had a firm Tibetan upbringing.

While these examples by no means cover all the attributes by which a Tibetan is authentically, recognizably "Tibetan," they do illustrate to some extent the bearing of this refugee group. The Tibetans who, in Peterson's words, "have move[d] geographically in order to remain where they are in all other respects" (Peterson 1958:258), have resurrected the ethos of old Tibet in an exile context, which, fortunately for them, is India.

In addition to the orientation suggested above, Tibetans as long-term refugees appear to share a growing sense of nationalism. In the days before flight, Tibetan self-image did not include a geopolitical sense of being Tibetans united in a nation governed by the Dalai Lama and his government (Ekvall 1960). In the refugee context, however, being Tibetan has not only religious, language, and custom criteria, but additionally, a measure of national identity. National identity in this case means "Tibetan orientation," allegiance voiced for the Dalai Lama who symbolizes Tibetan culture in its entirety, and action for *Rang-zen*, Tibetans' freedom cause. A good Tibetan not only acts out the rituals and moralistic teachings of Tibetan Buddhist faith, but he feels Tibet in his blood and is willing to sacrifice for it.

Thus, in the refugee context, success is viewed as working for "the cause" which, loosely construed, includes careers, employment, or volunteer service to, for, and with Tibetans and Tibetan institutions. A driver who shuttles Tibetan government workers about is "better" than one who chauffeurs an Indian or western family though the latter might earn a higher salary. Jobs with the Tibetan government carry such prestige that even those of an ascribed peasant heritage can achieve higher status through their dedication to their exile government (Avedon 1984). Other Tibetans describe with reverence the ascetic conditions in which *Gangkyi* (abbreviation for the place of the Tibetan government bureaucracy) workers live, the simple and mainly starch diet provided them from the local canteen, and the meager salaries (between 100 and 400 rupees per month) insuring their austerity. The fact that a Tibetan works for the Tibetans is key in evaluating the job and the person in it. The commonly given reason for this is that an element of sacrifice is considered to exist in these positions—those who hold them are working, after all, for lower salaries than those who work in Indian schools and offices, for an unrecognized government, and in a politically limited framework.

While Tibetan refugees may have sentimentalized an idealized past and created a perfect Tibet to be regained (Corlin 1975), there is little doubt that nationalism has increased throughout the years in exile, with the younger generation perhaps more willing to take

revenge on those who destroyed their parents' peace. Tibet is the central preoccupation of Tibetan refugees. In her TAT analysis of Tibetan refugees' responses, Miller (1978:385) found that regardless of age, the "overwhelming majority of respondents interpreted all sketches as if they were set in Tibet." Furthermore, she found a general optimism about the future of their own lives and their homeland, with some indication that their fulfillment of obligations, duties, and responsibilities to their elders would bring positive results both in their personal and their country's future. This "future" orientation imbued with a nationalistic stance provides a philosophical underpinning to the refugee experience, guiding the ordinary Tibetan through the scantness, the mundane, and the humiliating.

Conclusion

The legacy of Tibet, the forbidden land, lives on in its refugees who have shown again the amazing physical strength, stamina, and stubbornness of a people who for centuries have lived in terrain others cannot survive. In twenty-five years of exile, few Tibetans in India have been processed for resettlement. Few have opted for citizenship. Keeping refugee status is viewed as an action, an act of integrity in defense of faith. A Tibetan who has kept refugee status is thought to have kept his Tibetan-ness, an ethos mutually understood by Tibetans around the world. Taking citizenship, on the other hand, while giving functional benefits, renders the Tibetan unrecognizable, in both a profound and practical sense.

Psychologically, remaining refugees gives Tibetans a chance not only to live actively "in defense of faith," but in Erikson's words, to "die actively as the agent of a living cause" (Erikson 1964:95). Twenty-five years after the event of flight, then, what do Tibetans have, as refugees? I would suggest that Tibetan self-definition and individual identity, while reinforced by the presence of the group's leader, the Dalai Lama, are more clearly understood and felt because of the refugee status which frames their lives in India. It becomes a boundary of sorts between a Tibetan life and a more assimilated, acculturated—processed—existence.

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4

Refugees and the Structure of Opportunity: Transitional Adjustments to Aid Among U.S. Resettled Lao Iu Mien, 1980-1985

Jonathan Habarad

Introduction

Immigrant settlement in the United States since 1975 has followed two basic socioeconomic patterns. In the first, immigrants enter, locate themselves in a satisfactory area, find work, and begin the difficult process of adjustment. In the second, immigrants show prolonged dependency with an intensification of ethnic organization and slow progress in acquiring skills that would enable them to participate in the new society and productive economy. Refugee Lao Iu Mien have followed the second pattern. In this extended case study, I examine situations arising in Iu Mien resettlement to discover why they have found difficulty integrating into U.S. social and economic life.

The study uses data collected during five years of fieldwork among Iu Mien as they resettled in the San Francisco Bay Area between 1980 and 1985. My findings are based on participant observation and interviews in both Mien-waa and English. Resettlement workers and other non-Mien involved in highland Lao resettlement have provided important contextual data. Literature on highland Lao peoples and studies of migration and resettlement also provide an important background for the analysis and conclusions reached in this essay.

In research with a refugee Lao Hmong population of nearly 10,000 in San Diego county between 1979 and 1982, Scott (1982:146-147) observed their "increasing sense of identity" with the traits of unemployment and dependency, which he suggested further "impedes economic participation in the larger society." I have observed the same situation in the nearly 3,000 member Lao Iu Mien population settled in the San Francisco Bay Area.

Although derived from data on internal involuntary migration and resettlement, the four-stage processual model proposed by Scudder and Colson (1982) of recruitment/transition/potential development/integration can be applied to the Iu Mien case. The Mien are currently in the transitional stage and are marked by what Scudder (1973) called "cultural involution," wherein resettled migrants adopt a security orientation by reemphasizing and reenacting older patterns of belief and behavior instead of forging new ties involving balanced reciprocity with the host community. While both the Scudder and Colson and assimilation models (e.g., Gordon 1964; Yinger 1981) see such a conservative involutional period as one which allows newcomers to create a *temporary* buffer against change that is too rapid and/or severe, the Iu Mien, after truncated attempts at economic self-reliance, have exhibited this social turning-inward for such a period of time that it may contribute to a longer term socioeconomic marginality.

In the first section of this chapter I present material on the background of the Iu Mien before 1980 and U.S. refugee policy, both of which shed light of the current resettlement situation. The second section describes the processes by which the Iu Mien developed an involuted community organization and explains their adjustments to U.S. aid programs in the context of their available alternatives.

In the third section of the essay I discuss the dynamics of transitional adjustments in resettlement and alternative policy responses. I suggest that the resettlement of any population can involve self-sufficiency and considerable economic integration if it provides 1) accessibility of opportunities and 2) necessity to participate. If they have subsistence provided for them, relocatees whose skills are ill-suited to existing economic opportunities emerge from the shock of transition into development and self-sufficiency only when opportunities for participation in the productive economy at a significantly higher level of subsistence induce them to modify their skills, or when viable economic opportunities compatible with the existing skills, organization, and values of the community can be made accessible or enhanced. I argue that the duration and outcomes of initial adjustment are as dependent upon the kinds of alternatives available and on the responses and interactions of relocatee and host society institutions as on "primordial" or cultural characteristics of the resettling population. The opportunities available to relocatees directly influence the duration of transition and the nature of their emergence as participants in the host society.

The idea I am advancing, therefore, is that policies that focus on opening up opportunities for economic activity to relocatees are more effective than training programs for immediate modification of their values and skills. The situation within which Iu Mien were resettled, requiring a drastic modification of skills and values, both encouraged involution and contributed to problems of long-term dependence.

Cultural Premises, Recent History, and U.S. Refugee Policy

The Iu Mien are not hampered in their integration into U.S. society because of a past "traditional," static life in isolation. They have long experienced rapid social change and interaction with a variety of other groups. In the past they have moved often, making major accommodations to new social, economic, and political conditions, from southern China into the hills of Laos, Cambodia, and Thailand (Lemoine 1982). In Laos they found themselves threatened by fighting between French, lowland Lao, and highland factions as the French conquered the region. They felt the impact of lowland rebellions against French colonial rule and the Japanese invasion and occupation of their settlements for use as staging grounds in operations against Koumintang strongholds in southern China. Then came battles between Free French Forces and Japanese, Vietnamese military occupation in the early sixties, and finally the war in Laos. Lao Iu Mien participation in the war against Pathet Lao as American allies made them vulnerable when the United States withdrew from Southeast Asia in 1975. Approximately 13,000 fled to neighboring Thailand where they stayed nearly five years in refugee camps. In 1980 they began to receive visas for third country asylum in the United States. By 1984 roughly 7,500 had settled in the U.S., the majority of them in San Francisco Bay Area cities.

The Iu Mien had long remained economically independent of other groups. Until the late 1960s they were Taoist hill farmers practicing shifting cultivation. Those who knew them in Laos and Thailand reported that they distinguished themselves by their drive to produce. According to Kandre (1967:629), Iu Mien were "in their present environment . . . a disciplined, hardworking people, mainly interested in the peaceful accumulation of wealth, particularly in the form of money." Moreover, they strongly resisted "changes that decrease money-making capacity . . . because the Iu Mien measure the individual's chances to survive and succeed in terms of his money-making ability" (ibid.). Much like early Protestants, Iu Mien

equated material wealth and power with spiritual excellence, which was demonstrated through the hosting of religious ritual and seen as a mark of high status in both the earthly and spirit worlds. Because they strove to achieve surpluses that would bring important wealth, they were said to be well-off in comparison with other highland cultivators. I observed in Northern Thailand in 1983 that refugee Lao Iu Mien continue to demonstrate considerable motivation and flexibility, for in highland Thai Iu Mien settlements they were attempting with great energy to adopt lowland agricultural techniques.

Iu Mien in Laos had generally settled interspersed among other hill peoples, though where they could they built their settlements close together, as at Nam Moung Sing, near Nam Tha at the northwest tip of Laos. The ideal of close settlement was met by massive migrations from Nam Tha Province, Laos from 1968 to 1970 in response to U.S. military efforts to evacuate the countryside and to the establishment of large-scale U.S.-supported resettlement centers in Houei Sai Province in the hills along the Mekong through 1974. The density of Iu Mien settlement had until then been constrained by the lack of cultivable land sufficient to meet Iu Mien economic and ritual needs. This residential dispersal had resulted in considerable local-level autonomy.

Life in the densely settled relocation areas, on the other hand, was heavily subsidized by U.S. airdrops of rice and other essentials, bureaucratically administered through an emergent Iu Mien elite closely interlinked through ties of military and economic dependency and cooperation with U.S.A.I.D. and Royal Lao Government. Because of these linkages of external support and relative inactivity, much intensified in the refugee camp experiences from 1975 through 1980, Iu Mien came to the United States with a 15-year legacy of dependency. The ideal of autonomy and self-sufficiency had been the experience only of those over age 30 in 1980. Those who for the most part were to take effective command of household decisions in U. S. resettlement were the young, who had known nothing else.

The U.S. refugee policies that affected Iu Mien were aimed at easing their entry and promoting their rapid advance to self-sufficiency in American society, and these policies had worked reasonably well with early Vietnamese refugees. After 1979, programs for refugee resettlement in the United States were founded on the perception that the refugee is "displaced and in need only of temporary assistance to enable him/her to resume activity more or less resembling that of any newcomer" (Lanphier 1983:11). According to Lanphier, the U.S. system was designed to accommodate a large volume of refugees with a focus on their quick integration into the productive economy,

requiring federal subsidy only during the initial period of adjustment. Federal funds for refugee resettlement were managed by the Bureau for Refugee Programs within the Department of State and were distributed to voluntary agencies such as the United States Catholic Conference, the International Rescue Committee, and the Immigration and Refugee Program of Church World Service for them to oversee initial refugee settlement (Etzioni 1981; North, Lewin, and Wagner 1982).

In addition, the Office of Refugee Resettlement within the Department of Health and Human Services funded a program which was administered at state level. Until mid-1982, upon arrival in the United States, refugees who were not categorically eligible for public assistance were eligible for a 36-month federal subsistence grant (Refugee Cash Assistance), paid monthly through county social service departments at a rate comparable to state/county Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) grants, and Refugee Medical Assistance modeled on Medicaid. In the San Francisco Bay Area, refugees were routinely registered for these public assistance programs by the sponsoring voluntary agencies during the first or second week after their arrival. Families that were categorically eligible for AFDC, either its single-parent or unemployed-parent programs, received assistance with full federal reimbursement for 36 months. Refugees were eligible for AFDC-UP (Unemployed Parent) provided they were able to assemble adequate work histories. This program furnished basically the same financial and program support as Refugee Cash Assistance and had no time limit for eligibility. In California most unemployed refugee "heads of household" became eligible for this program. Persons over age 18 with no dependent children became eligible for the less desirable county "General Assistance."

In mid-1982 the Department of Health and Human Services restricted eligibility for the Refugee Cash Assistance program which had subsidized state and county payments of cash assistance to refugees who would not otherwise have been eligible for public aid. This revision precipitated a near panic within Iu Mien and other Highland Lao refugee communities throughout the U.S., because each state varied considerably in its willingness to continue assisting the refugees with money from the state treasury. California's programs for public assistance, for example its AFDC-UP program, funded in equal shares by state, county, and federal funds, provided one of the highest levels of assistance to refugees in the nation. Thus during late 1982 and 1983, Highland Lao Hmong and Iu Mien from other states settled in California's Central Valley with numbers estimated as high as 23,000

distributed over Fresno, Merced, Kings, Tulare and other counties. Secondary and tertiary migration increased as even employed elites were drawn by the availability of increased public assistance, the possibility of participation in agricultural activity, the relatively rural settings, and the prospect for reunification of scattered kin and neighbors. Few found work. Scott's 1982 estimate of 95% reliance upon some form of public assistance by Lao Hmong in San Diego county is comparable to the result of a census I conducted during 1982 among Lao Iu Mien in the San Francisco Bay Area. 1983 estimates of Highland Lao unemployment in the Valley ranged around 90 percent (Schein, personal communication).

The interplay of policy decisions and refugee responses illuminates the basic host/immigrant relationship through which highland Lao adjusted to American life. Policymakers expected that earlier policies toward refugee integration, such as geographic dispersal, could be applied to all refugee groups, but by June 1982 the Director of the Federal Office of Refugee Resettlement acknowledged in a memo to his regional directors that the resettlement of non-literate, "unskilled" peoples might be more problematic than the settlement of literate and skilled Southeast Asians from lowland cities (Hawkes 1982).

While Iu Mien in Southeast Asia had for the most part been autonomous, self-reliant, and geographically dispersed, in U.S. resettlement they came to manifest patterns of large-scale settlement, intra-community political centralization, and for the first five years, overall economic dependency. The problems leading to this stark contrast are situational, not intrinsic or cultural; they are a result of the way in which resettlement was planned and administered. It began with the U.S.-involved relocations of Iu Mien in 1967 which discouraged individual action, initiative, or sense of responsibility, and which channeled Iu Mien organization toward a pattern of political centralization and dependency within their large-scale settlement.

The Process of Resettlement

If one examines the process of resettlement, it is clear that Iu Mien first responded with some eagerness to the possibility of becoming self-supporting in the United States, but that over the following five years turned instead, almost categorically, to the less difficult course of an exploitation of the frameworks of dependency.

The first few Mien arrived under the sponsorship of Seattle, Portland, and San Francisco churches in 1978. Because the State Department feared that Iu Mien were too "backward" to adjust to the demands of American life, they were among the last 1975 land refugees to be considered for resettlement in the United States (William Sage, personal communication 1982). Those admitted first were among the literate few who had attended lowland schools, and were somewhat familiar with bureaucracy. Four families arrived in the Bay Area in 1978 and more came in 1979. They found jobs in the first few months, then sponsored relatives remaining in the camps and helped them in turn make further applications to bring in kin from the Thai camps. By 1980, Iu Mien families were arriving in the Bay Area at a rate of between 30 and 35 families per month. By the end of 1980, there were roughly 2,000 Iu Mien scattered in local communities in five Bay Area cities.

Iu Mien began their transition by reconstructing kinship and community relations within which resources could be mobilized to cope with the exigencies and problems of everyday life. Here, they behaved like many other immigrants; by isolating themselves in ethnic communities they were able to "reduce the number, scope and intensity" of problems with which they had to cope (Graves and Graves 1974). Through chain immigration and secondary relocations they were able to reconstruct a familiar social, cultural, economic, and political milieu—a social organization in which the actors knew how to cope, and in which the roles necessary for functioning on familiar bases were filled by men and women with appropriate skills and relations. In this, refugees from Laos and Vietnam have proceeded in comparable fashion (Dunnigan 1982:132; see also Pisarowicz and Tosher 1982).

The Reorganization of Communities

In the Bay Area Iu Mien organized households of agnatic sublineages with as many as sixteen members as the basic domestic and economic unit. These were nominally headed by a lineage patriarch but often came to be organized and managed by a younger man who had proven himself capable of coping with the demands of daily life, and represented the household in most extra-household affairs. A number of households clustered on the same or contiguous blocks despite the opposition of local voluntary agencies which tried to promote dispersal and integration and discouraged the taking of apartments owned by exploitative landlords. However, Iu Mien were

prepared to endure high rents, dangerous neighborhoods, and poor conditions to be assured of having important kin and friends nearby.

Five such neighborhoods were established within the first year of resettlement. In the area in which I began fieldwork in 1980, one neighborhood had as many as 25 households within three blocks, comprising 225 persons. Nearly 40 households settled within a four-block neighborhood in another area. Household leaders in such local settlements were organized in patron-clientships around influential neighborhood leaders known for good judgement and success in dealing with problems. Each local settlement acknowledged such a headman, who mediated problems within the settlement and represented it in matters of general community concern.

The Role of Elites

In Southeast Asia patron-clientage had become an important element of Iu Mien organization. Within a relatively familiar environment, leadership by local elites was conducive to maintenance and control of mutually beneficial or cooperative relations between Iu Mien and alien peoples. It minimized the necessity for non-elites to be directly involved with those outside their own group. In the United States, Iu Mien activated a similar but far more centralized pattern of mediation. In U. S. resettlement, elites were expected to be experts in the interethnic social and economic relations upon which non-elites saw themselves dependent. Iu Mien tried as much as possible to build closely interacting and interdependent networks of kin organized around men of influence. Proximity to elite leadership was one of the critical considerations leading to the concentration of highland Lao refugees in centralized areas of settlement.

The unfamiliar social and economic milieu resulted in a heightened dependence upon elites and insulated most men and women from members of the host society and from opportunities to develop a familiarity with American life that would facilitate self-sufficiency. The social and political networks of elites became crucial in the marshaling of public and private support and the allocation of funds for social, economic, and educational programs on behalf of their communities. Elite mediators were also important in winning public attention through use of the mass media. Leaders became brokers of power and skills who could call upon sympathetic or interested members of the host society to deal with tasks for which Iu Mien felt ill-prepared.

Elites were able to obtain host society support on the basis of two central elements: first, by using their own organizational ability to present a more or less united front, and second, by reinforcing the host society perception of their peoples as having a "special and limited status." Through the mediation of their elites, it became unnecessary for non-elite Mien to invest effort in developing skills themselves in order to see tasks accomplished. Since they were not actors, but beneficiaries, it was often unnecessary for them to take initiative with respect to host society matters or be fully committed to decisions.

Cultural Difference and Involution

Throughout the first year Iu Mien were preoccupied with initial adjustments to the urban U.S. environment: acquiring an elementary grasp of the language, orienting themselves, and coping with daily problems. As they learned about their situation they began to measure and place themselves within it. They were confronted daily with dual role models for American life; their teachers were educated and well-to-do and their neighbors were uneducated, poor, and dependent. Few Iu Mien aspired or could aspire to either model. They confronted the marginality of their position in often bitter debate. A great deal of speculation, gossip, and infighting came to be centered on the issue of adherence to traditional behavior and dress, to the necessity for it, or to the stigma it might bring their people in relation to American norms. In January 1981, the issue of Mien "selfhood" became the overall symbolic issue that split the community into a large "traditionalist" faction and a small "assimilationist" faction. The latter sought to eliminate many of the symbols and behaviors that, they alleged, branded their people with shame and the stigma of "backwardness."

The more Iu Mien adults appraised the gulf between themselves and their host society counterparts the greater the alienation they came to express in public and private conversation. There was a need to define, or redefine both Mien and personal "selfhood" in the face of this void with respect to the outside. Mien selfhood came to be defined in terms of attributes and behaviors agreed upon as truly "Mien" by those of one's "meaningful" social network. A "Mien" identity came to be expressed and circumscribed by participation in ritual and political events that defined the ideal order of the world vis-à-vis the real. In fact, the ideal expression of Mien identity became important not simply vis-à-vis the "external" world, but because of it,

and the threat it carried to their sense of honor and continuity as a people.

The dilemma of personal status *within* the community also came to be of great importance in the face of the anonymity and marginality they experienced in relation to members of the host society. The recent scrambling and fragmentation of their community resulting from relocation opened many status offices and created new opportunities for enhancing one's position within the Iu Mien universe. Differences in wealth that had, in Laos, been important for differentiating status and power within the community were now leveled by assistance programs with grants adjusted to family size.

In the face of the low status and lack of power they assumed with respect to the host society, power and esteem within the community became increasingly important to them. Ritual and political activity, formerly marking wealth and high spiritual and social status, intensified dramatically from the end of the first year onward. Since most adults attended school only a few hours a day, they had much time to fill. In the context of relative equality of economic means, the number of people one could mobilize for ritual and political affairs came to reflect one's status and power. By becoming close to influential and highly esteemed local patrons, men and women saw themselves as gaining in status and security through their participation, since it emphasized their mutual interdependency and responsibilities. Symbolic interdependencies carried practical consequences since they were the means by which networks were formed for the pooling of resources necessary for coping in daily life and in times of crisis. As men acquired cars and learned to drive, active networks expanded over the entire Bay Area. Hosting ritual and political activities for large numbers of "supporters," in which men vied for prestige, became a way of enhancing or marking status even among non-elites, and resulted in very active networks of ritual, political, and even economic interdependency.

These status and power contests involved cultural and political activities of great intrinsic and practical interest to Iu Mien. Political and religious ritual provided a framework for community life in which men were constantly striving to build new alliances. By the end of the second year they had constructed a vital arena of action, intrigue, and drama in which each man and woman became an important actor. Involvement in this arena so organized the community and occupied their interests that it made the external milieu seem pale and distant.

Involution and Strategies for Adjustment

In October 1980, at about the 10th month of resettlement and when awareness and debate about the gulf between Mien and American ways were reaching a peak, representatives of more than 500 people—between 45 and 55 household leaders—met in Bay Area-wide meetings held in San Francisco on four consecutive weekends in the large apartment of the headman of the San Francisco community. They met because, in their growing awareness of the differences between themselves and Americans, they were becoming increasingly uncertain of their futures in the U.S. and wanted to hear about and decide upon alternatives.

At the first meeting they voted unanimously with a show of hands to found a self-help association. It was created and staffed by popular vote from the entire Bay Area community excepting the small, dissident assimilationist faction whose members had removed themselves from the main areas of Mien settlement. The elected officers and staff were mostly sons of local headmen and former headmen, so that the organization reproduced the existing political structure of the community, replacing old men with young men who better grasped the conditions and problems Iu Mien faced in resettlement.

At subsequent meetings, two main questions were discussed: 1) shall we try to find our way in America as a community or as individuals? and 2) as farmers, shall we look for our possibilities here in farming, or in other types of work in industrial centers? They debated at length the question of dispersing to smaller towns and decided overwhelmingly in favor of staying together and helping one another. By the end of the fourth meeting, with much enthusiasm, they voted almost unanimously to pursue agriculture as their means of economic integration. They developed a "dream" of Iu Mien agricultural settlements on which they would live and work, transplanting the old strategy and social organization to their new setting. They formed a committee to carry out the search for possibilities and drew up appeals to American aid organizations. Because it is illustrative of their position I will include excerpts from a letter that emerged from the committee in mid-1981:

> Few of our people are productively employed. Our people have few skills that are marketable in an urban economy and most speak little English, further limiting their possibilities for unskilled employment in an already overcrowded job market. Most of us feel that we can sit no longer in idleness. We want urgently to become productive members of American society and

economy. . . . Two-hundred and fifty families, comprising about 1,200 of our people ask your help in obtaining land for community use, by which they can resume active, meaningful lives in the production of food crops for their own subsistence. We two-hundred and fifty family heads have chosen this course after considerable discussion and thought.

In our present situation we are faced with a total reorientation to life. We cannot afford but to live in the city slum areas. Our people, if they adjust, will not adjust to the life styles and expectations of mainstream America, but to the culture of poverty and dependence of the ghetto. We have always been a proud and productive farming people. Our life style and all our traditions are centered on agriculture and its cycles. The scope of reorientation required of us by our present situation is total: we fear that an adjustment of such magnitude cannot be made in a reasonable time.

With the possibility to develop community-based subsistence farming we hope to begin a productive entry into American life. As our life styles are traditionally centered on agriculture, the transition from life in Laos to life in America would become more familiar, and we hope, more attainable. In contrast to our present enforced idleness, the resumption of such a life style would provide a productive and meaningful role for each family member. Further, although we are a farming people we are unfamiliar with American farming techniques. Our efforts could serve us as small-scale, first-hand training in such techniques, while making us self-sufficient. It would be our first major step toward economic self-reliance and independence, giving us a firm basis from which to enter the larger society and productive economy, and serving as a stable core around which to build our lives and find our ways in America. [author's translation 1981]

Applications from Iu Mien living in Portland, Seattle, and Long Beach brought the total number of volunteers who wanted to live and work as members of the proposed agricultural settlement to over 2,000 persons. Others said that if the first efforts succeeded they would hope to join established settlements. At this point the ethos of self-reliance was genuine, widespread, and strong. Young and old, most Mien believed with certainty that when their three years of eligibility for Refugee Cash Assistance expired, they would be entirely on their own. They desperately wanted that the opportunity be given to them to invest their energies and futures in agricultural settlements that would lead to self-sufficiency and a secure place.

Over a two-year period, with strong community participation, the association made several detailed requests to American foundations and other organizations capable of providing the necessary infrastructure. The projects to produce crops for existing specialty and vegetable markets, planned with the assistance of professionals, were considered by evaluators to be economically feasible, but possibly problematic from a social and political perspective—especially in terms of equity toward other disadvantaged communities. There was also disagreement about who ought to sponsor such projects. Private foundations saw the projects to be the responsibility of Health and Human Services, who in turn, saw such experimental efforts to belong to the province of private philanthropy. As each request was denied, Iu Mien confidence in their "dream" faltered.

Adjustment to Dependency

During these years few Iu Mien made significant progress toward self-sufficiency, in part at least because they waited for the agricultural projects to materialize. During this time they instead developed highly insulated communities largely dependent upon subsistence funds from federal, state, and private sector social service programs. They came to justify continued dependence on the grounds that they remained inadequately prepared to enter the mainstream of American life. This view was shared by many of those working in Bay Area and national agencies responsible for facilitating their resettlement.

Alternatives for Action and Uncertainty

Iu Mien arrived during a period of economic recession when general high unemployment reduced the number and scope of opportunities available to them. They were a small immigrant population arriving after an influx of Vietnamese and other refugees had created a large pool of better-skilled, unemployed labor in which they would have to compete for employment.

Job-training programs for refugees set up by the local sponsoring agencies had few tangible results. Though voluntary agency and project staff were often excellent and highly committed, responsibility for program development and clientele was extremely ambiguous and efforts were minimally coordinated. Overall, staff had little information about the particular needs of their clients. There was a redundancy in the provision of some services with large gaps in continuity across programs, and little means of graduating from one program to

another in a logical manner. The result was a confusing array of uncoordinated and disjointed programs from which refugees had to choose, and then wait or fight for placement. Poor timing, short program lifespans, and a lack of information about future programming contributed to the ambiguity (see also Gold in this volume).

Refugees, especially Iu Mien, lacked an understanding of the long-term possibilities in various commercial and industrial fields. This made it difficult for them to see how to use training programs to enter employment and often contributed to a lack of commitment. On the other hand, participation in language and training programs gave access to crucial resources. These included instructors and other program personnel, usually well educated and with official connections, who could be called upon informally to assist in the solution of problems arising in the context of everyday life. They were commonly used as mediators in maintaining the flow of public assistance. Initially, therefore, Iu Mien developed patron-client relationships with agency personnel and volunteers which provided some links with non-Mien. But as their own elites gained experience in the required techniques even these contacts lapsed.

Dependency and the Paradox of Self-Reliance

Lack of important language and other skills made it difficult for Iu Mien to find work, but this was not impossible. Those who sought employment were usually able to find it. Yet after three years of settlement in the Bay Area fewer than thirty men were employed out of a total population of nearly three thousand. There was good reason for their reluctance to take jobs. Refugee assistance and AFDC grants were adjusted to family size; wages were not. Income gained from working at minimum wage could not support a large family, and most could find work only at the minimum wage. Choosing to work meant considerable financial disadvantage which, given the material and religious significance Iu Mien placed on saving and maximizing wealth, would have meant a major loss of security. They also believed that finding work meant loss of eligibility for assistance programs such as further occupational and English-language training, medical insurance, and legal services which provided security against unforeseen problems. Finding a job, they thought, meant that one was completely on one's own.

Given the uncertainty of their situation few were willing to take the risk or trouble to try employment, especially since the jobs available failed to offer even the incentive of possible advancement. Many

who worked quit when they realized that they would receive more for attending classes preparing for better paid employment than they would working at low-paying jobs. Because of their concern for the well-being of their families and despite a very real desire for self-reliance, the wisest course often seemed to be to wait and observe new developments without making decisions, thus leaving their options open.

While waiting, both for new opportunities and for their more and more distant dream to materialize, they showed considerable willingness to experiment, differentiating their choices and experiences as they learned to maneuver in the urban American setting. Such a tendency to experiment during the early stage has also been observed by Scudder (1966) and Colson (1971) in the Kariba resettlement in Zambia. Here it contributed in part to the social and political flux evident in the Iu Mien community. Experimentation was clearly evident throughout the first four years after arrival but became attenuated as they settled on a set of basic strategies and resources enabling them to meet the demands of U.S. life. By the fourth year, following a relatively smooth transition from Refugee Cash Assistance to other public assistance programs, only the aged and a few elites expressed a desire to return to Laos. Though others held to their dream of agricultural settlement, it was now more dream than a plan for action. When in 1983 a patron provided land in West Virginia a few pioneers attempted to create an agricultural settlement, but this ultimately failed, in part because community leaders would not leave the Bay Area. They had lost confidence in their "dream," in part because much of their transitional adjustment had already been accomplished and launching the new settlement involved such a high degree of risk.

Social and Economic Adjustment

With the failure of the West Virginia agricultural resettlement most men and women came to regard the idea of self-sufficient farming as impractical or impossible. The elite also had begun to lose their credibility as effective brokers for their people, both for their unwillingness to show personal commitment in the West Virginia experience, and because of the demonstration of their relative powerlessness highlighted by the difficulties in dealing with American foundations and agencies in general and specifically in regard to West Virginia. The drama of intrigue and cultural-political contest became less

engrossing as the outside world became more familiar through time and presented less of a threat. By the beginning of the fifth year many of the most capable men and women had begun to feel that investment in community affairs and the common good restricted them and came at the expense of individual progress.

A meeting was called by the association president and a few officers in November 1984 to form a committee for developing a Iu Mien community center. In 1981 this had been a high priority goal widely seen as necessary for preserving Iu Mien religious and cultural traditions. Few who attended now showed interest in serving or investing time in the project. The more capable men and women had begun to reject the notion that a community orientation would benefit them. They were interested in employment and looked more and more to the urban industrial and service sectors as their only alternatives. A few had begun to seek work in these sectors, while the majority, who were less well prepared and less confident, intensified their adjustment to ghetto life with its typical problems and solutions.

Those who remained unemployed expressed discouragement. Most adults were still unwilling to commit themselves to any decision involving risk through loss of public assistance. Men and women who could not yet read or write continued to enroll in training programs, often serially, but without seeking employment upon completion. Few had confidence that they understood or would be good at the industry jobs for which they had been trained. No one was convinced that the training they had received would lead to jobs that provide a good living or a better life style. Many who once expressed high hopes no longer hoped for or sought employment. They looked rather to their children as those who would succeed in entering "American" life. Many young men with families and responsibilities seemed no longer to expect to achieve self-reliance. They despaired and said that they did not know what they or their families would do without public assistance. The problems of many urban ghetto communities crept into their own. Gambling, drinking, drug abuse, delinquency, and incidents of wife-beating increased in frequency.

After five years most men and women under 40 attended language or job training classes from 2 to 4 hours a day. The remaining part of their days were spent attending to family business, dealing with minor crises, or involved in ritual, politics, or recreation in the company of friends and kin, feeling more or less at "home" in changing but wholly Iu Mien sociation.

Discussion

Transitional forms of immigrant adjustment depend to a large extent upon the abilities and orientations that newcomers bring to the situation. Adjustment is accomplished through strategies that seek to minimize the gap between what immigrants have done in the past and what is needed in the present to achieve a satisfactory level of subsistence. Immigrants attempt to make choices favoring the familiar skills they bring with them, and in terms of the values that guided them in the old land. Often these just don't work.

Elite members of the population may be less conservative even in the initial period of resettlement since they often can put to good use the skills and styles of action that they enjoyed in their areas of origin. Keller (1975), for example, described refugee survivors of war and flight as displaying personality characteristics of guilt, invulnerability, and aggressiveness which found expression throughout the period of resettlement in "an increased willingness to innovate, to take risks and to make the effort to build a new life" (Stein, 1981:323). As Stein noted (1981:323), Keller worked primarily with refugees from among the better educated and more active age groups. They were moving into an opportunity structure for which they were competitively prepared. Since they had limited recourse to aid, but did possess some skills adaptable to the local economic environment, their decisions were channeled more or less by economic necessity. The choice to respond aggressively to relocation using the limited skills at their disposal rewarded most with an adequate survival or better, reinforcing innovation and risk-taking.

Thus, in situations where economic necessity compels it, or where economic opportunities exist compatible with the skills and demands of the relocatees, emergence from transitional conservatism may be rapid. The experiences of Vietnamese and other literate, urban populations who have found economic integration in the U.S. relatively less problematic than have highland Lao, and the earlier emergence of Iu Mien and Hmong elites among highland Lao further demonstrate the importance of accessibility of opportunities through skills and organizational abilities which are familiar at the time of relocation (cf. Finnan 1982:163-164).

When faced with a strange environment which they are unable to exploit because they lack the necessary skills or resources, refugees and other relocatees are hesitant to decide upon a course of action. The Iu Mien solution was to pursue a familiar form of social and economic organization by seeking opportunities for agricultural settlement.

When their efforts failed, most opted for the most secure alternative available: an involuted social organization supported by problematic but reliable external aid. With this they were already familiar, from the camp experience and an earlier clientship with U.S. and international institutions. During their initial years in the United States, most Iu Mien concentrated their efforts on reestablishing families, communities, and an optimal place for themselves within their own milieu. Their great involvement in internal dynamics or "involution" in turn led to a lack of progress in the acquisition of skills required for participation in the wider society and economy that they little understood. Scott's discussion of Hmong who resettled in a community of over ten thousand in San Diego suggests precisely the same process of involution (1982:152-154).

The continued dependency of Iu Mien reinforced notions of basic cultural incompatibility held by U.S. policymakers and service providers. They called for more funding and special programs to aid in the process of integration. This fed back into the belief of refugee elites that their people had a "special and limited status" entitling them to special programs and indefinitely continued aid. Self-reliance and commitment outside the ethnic community were seen as both unnecessary and obsolete.

Conclusion

Policymakers thus are faced with a paradox. Highland Lao and others whose skills are unsuited to existing economic niches must necessarily rely upon external aid, yet aid has subsidized nonparticipation and led to the institutionalization of dependency. Scudder and Colson suggest that the transition from dependency to self-reliance, from "welfare to development" "requires initiative on the part of relocatees" and that to engender initiative "every effort should be made to help them help themselves 'to get back on their feet at the earliest possible moment'" and stress the importance of avoiding the creation of "a dependency relation between relocatees and resettlement authorities" (1982:286). If aid is to lead to development it must reward steps toward self-reliance. This can best be done if programs are developed in consultation with members of the resettling population to discover what rewards they seek and how they think these can be attained within a given time schedule (cf. Anderson 1975; Ralston, Anderson and Colson 1983:114).

Involuted systems can allow and even contribute to economic self-sufficiency and provide a sense of security and familiarity in the new setting, but only if the values, skills, and organization of relocatees are suited to available economic niches. Israeli researchers report that by using the "values, norms and social patterns" that immigrants bring with them, it is "possible to attain a more normal process of social change" with "existing social mechanisms of the new immigrants harnessed" to facilitate their social and economic integration (Shapiro 1971:251). The Israeli resettlement system encourages immigrant communities to remain intact through provision of "means of livelihood, means of production and support during the initial period" and "direction and instruction" to assist new immigrants in achieving self-sufficiency (Rahat 1971:72). Though it is not without problems it facilitates a cost-efficient emergence from transition through near immediate integration within the host society and productive economy.

For "cooperative aid" to be effective, programs must be: 1) planned with and well-suited to the immediate skills of those who will participate, 2) planned to allow for financial security superior to that provided by other assistance program alternatives, 3) structured so that the basic resources and opportunities are available, but so responsibility for management and coping is entirely in the hands of participants, 4) made available early on to reach relocatees at a time when they are initially experimenting with the incorporation of new potentials into familiar patterns, and 5) of limited duration.

As suggested in the beginning of this paper, agencies assisting in resettlement can stress change in two directions: 1) in the persons being resettled, or 2) in their environments. Resettlement programs in the U.S. have essentially done both: they have provided programs stressing new training for refugees, and at the same time have created a special economic environment requiring minimal participation through the provision of near total support. Programs involving major shifts in economic strategy are problematic in that they call for change to new modes of behavior and organization at a time when relocatees are attempting to salvage as much of the old as possible.

The provision of categorical "blanket" aid in the framework of patron/clientship makes concessions and commitments by relocatees largely unnecessary. Decisions of whether, or "how to," participate will be channeled by relocatee perceptions of opportunities and constraints in the new setting. Modifying the situations that confront relocatees so as to enable them to utilize familiar skills without requiring immediate changes will provide continuity and facilitate a gradual

shift in skills and organization to meet new economic demands. The creation or enhancement of short-term opportunities for economic participation would certainly be less a burden and more equitable to a taxpaying public than are the requirements of long-term support. Policy must allow for program flexibility as it deals with different populations if it is to facilitate "durable solutions" allowing rapid and productive integration. Such an approach as is outlined here is difficult, but certainly programming short-term opportunities for self-reliance should be preferable to the human and financial costs of long-term unemployment and dependence.

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5

Control of Contrast: Lao Hmong Refugees in American Contexts

Louisa Schein

> Our opposition makes us feel we are not completely victims of the circumstances. It allows us to prove our strength consciously and only thus gives vitality and reciprocity to conditions from which, without such corrective, we would withdraw at any cost . . . opposition is an element in the relation itself; it is intrinsically interwoven with the other reasons for the relation's existence. It is not only a *means* for preserving the relation but one of the concrete functions which actually constitute it.
>
> —Georg Simmel
> *Conflict* [1908:19]

The study of social change in situations of resettlement often focuses on the maintenance or dissolution of ethnic identity. Because resettled populations so often face unfamiliar social and cultural conditions, the dynamics of culture contact with host populations receive what I consider to be an inordinate amount of attention. A common effort, for example, is to locate the migrant groups on a continuum—implicitly or explicitly representing linear progression—between presumed polar opposites such as traditional/modern or preservation/assimilation. This necessitates elaboration of a cultural portrait of the migrants before they left home so as to assess how they have changed and to determine their "cultural compatibility" (Kunz

1981:46-7) with receiving societies. Once reified, the degree of cultural compatibility is assumed to be correlated with the time it takes for newcomers to become integrated in their new country (cf. Lanphier 1983:16-17).

This approach has several drawbacks. First, by assuming a linear progression toward integration, it ignores the particular historical situations that different migrants encounter over time and categorizes their experience as *either* advancement or regression. Second, once a "cultural portrait" has been sketched, considerable homogeneity is assumed. Inevitable internal variation then becomes a confounding factor in placement on any continuum. Third, it presumes that cultural features of relocatees and hosts antedate, and therefore are not a function of, interaction between the two groups.

As against this approach, I suggest that changes taking place with resettlement should be seen as social processes involving contact. Differentiation between settlers and hosts takes place as a result of this contact. This paper looks at the resettlement of Hmong refugees from Laos to the U.S. as a process defined by the interaction between hosts and settlers. The Hmong respond as they do not because they are Hmong but because they are coping with an American society which presents them with certain possibilities.

In 1983 the Office of Refugee Resettlement estimated that there were approximately 60,000 Hmong in the United States. The particular problem I consider here is the reason for the unplanned secondary migration of one third of their number to the Central San Joaquin Valley of California in the years 1979 to the present. Sizable refugee communities now exist in such Central Valley cities as Fresno, Merced, and Stockton. The migration has caused much consternation among sponsors, social-service providers, and concerned policymakers who feel almost betrayed by the rejection of their investment in helping Hmong refugees adjust in scattered and disparate localities across the U.S. That feeling was based on the expectation that dispersal would speed their absorption into U.S. society and that this was desirable. From this perspective, Hmong motives for moving seem inscrutable. Their continued high rate (approximately 95%) of dependence on public assistance foils any explanation that the move was based on incentives of economic innovation. The belief that Hmong should be on a linear path of "progress" toward self-sufficiency and cultural integration frames this most recent migration as a regression.

Many factors appear to have informed the decision to move. None alone can explain the phenomenon, but all involve decisions by the Hmong about who they are. Through an historically grounded interpretation, I hope to shed some light on the process through which

Hmong negotiate their presence in the United States with regard to perceived advantages and opportunities. The diachronic mode of exposition adopted does not imply that I assume a necessary developmental logic. Indeed I argue the opposite: that the present Hmong situation is an outgrowth of an ongoing process of decision making and interaction between Hmong and non-Hmong over the course of their time here and that it is guided by the expectations based on previous experience which they brought with them.

My comments are based on my research in the California Central Valley as part of ongoing work on Hmong in resettlement and other contexts. As a consultant for the U.S. Office of Refugee Resettlement, I made several visits to the San Joaquin Valley city of Merced in Fall 1983. Most of my conclusions are generalizable to the whole Central Valley—referred to more colloquially as the "Valley"—but findings unique to Merced are so identified.

Lao-Hmong Background

The Hmong from Laos have a long history of minority group status. This strongly informs their relations with outsiders. They were a highland agriculturalist people who migrated southward out of China beginning in the latter half of the nineteenth century. They moved in search of swidden fields and in response to conflicts with Han Chinese and other neighbors. As land and other resources became scarce, they adopted extensive opium cultivation. This resulted in growing economic interdependence with lowland neighbors (cf. Grandstaff 1979).

Political ties were formalized during the French colonial period in Laos (1893-1945). At the turn of the century Hmong began to be appointed as "*tasseng*" to collect tax and to govern particular cantons (Yang 1976:41). The tasseng had strong links with colonial administrators. These linkages allowed patron-client relationships to be consolidated internally, as a growing contingent of elites reaped the power advantages of mediating between their people and the government. According to one account, the strength of a tasseng's following was to a large extent dependent on his willingness to "*hlub*" (love, take care of) his people, especially in the form of loans to meet the opium tax (personal communication 1981).

As Leach persuasively demonstrates in *Political Systems of Highland Burma* (1954), structural changes in intergroup relations brought about by such political and economic developments can have far-

reaching impact on perception of ideal social types and thus on the cultural "dress" (ibid.:16) adopted to symbolize them. The French colonial era, still vividly recalled by members of the older generation, had profound influence upon Lao-Hmong perception of themselves vis-à-vis other groups in the same social system. Interactions with colonial authorities, while at times turbulent (Yang 1976:49-50; Mottin 1980:47), achieved a certain stability in which Hmong status as "other" became formally articulated as "subordinate" (cf. Berreman 1977:221). At rock bottom, Hmong understanding of their life situation is based on the conviction that such low status is a function of disparity of wealth, not of social or cultural inferiority. One Hmong refugee who classed the mountains of China with the war zones of Laos and the ghettos of American cities asked rhetorically, "Why have Hmong always occupied the danger zones? On account of our poverty" (personal communication 1983). The relevance of *perceived* subordinate status becomes clear when one examines strategies adopted in recent Lao-Hmong history.

The War Years

Hmong gave extensive support to United States war efforts in Laos from 1959-1975. Many neglected agricultural production in favor of military employment. Those who were actively involved as soldiers or other technical personnel were incorporated along with their families and villages into a politico-military structure even more rigidly hierarchical than under the French. A guerilla army financed by the United States was created. It included some Lowland Lao, Yao, Lao Theung, and other highland groups, but was largely commanded by a new Hmong leadership under Hmong General Vang Pao (Schanche 1970:64-65, 80; Yang n.d.:5-6). The availability of considerable economic resources and opportunities for professional training for ambitious young Hmong men created channels for personal advancement. It also encouraged aspirations to political ascendancy seen as unattainable for the Hmong within the previous Laotian context. Civilians in the non-communist and disputed zones were also radically affected by a rural depopulation program orchestrated by the U.S. through the provision of air-dropped rice and other supplies. Large numbers of villagers left the conflict zones for densely populated resettlement areas almost exclusively dependent on external provisions for subsistence (Branfman 1970:254). Thus, for many Lao-Hmong, a dependent and marginal existence as "refugees" began even before they left Laos.

U.S. withdrawal and the establishment of the Lao People's Democratic Republic in 1975 precipitated the flight into Thailand of large numbers of Hmong who had supported the United States. Upon arrival, they were resettled in refugee camps administered by the Thai government and supported by the United Nations and international relief agencies. Shelter and livelihood were almost completely provided by external benefactors, and as the supply of provisions and privileges was sometimes erratic, relations with camp authorities were crucial.

Stein (1981:324) summarizes Mamdani's (1973) position as suggesting that the experience of camp life gives refugees not only a sense of dependency, but also a clear signal that they have a special and limited status and are controlled by others. As they had no decision-making power over many aspects of daily life, they came to use their "special status" as a means to ensure economic security. Not only were internal camp relations important, but once in Thailand Hmong refugees also became part of an international network which included refugees, media, and relief institutions. Publicity for their situation affected the degree and type of aid received. With no opportunity to produce their own subsistence, refugees in the camps faced instead the task of conveying a sense of their plight sufficiently compelling so that external aid would continue to flow to them.

Resettlement

Hmong refugees began to resettle in Western countries as early as 1975. Their number in 1983 in the U.S. alone is approximately 60,000. Smaller numbers live in France, Canada, and Australia. Although they regard the move from the refugee camps as a choice in favor of economic independence, those in the U.S. have relied extensively on public assistance during the first years of resettlement. However, this is not universal. In some parts of the country, significant numbers of Hmong have chosen employment in industrial and service occupations, only to endure the vicissitudes of layoffs and rehirings deriving from the turbulence of the American industrial economy. Others with some educational attainment or leadership vision have gone into social service provision for Hmong and other refugee groups. But many have adopted a resettlement strategy which favors long-term training in language and other skills over immediate participation in low-wage entry-level employment. The Hmong choices appear to be a reaction to how the U.S. has dealt with them since Hmong in other countries have made markedly different adjustments

in terms of economic and social integration (cf. Lanphier 1983).

Settlement in the U.S.

On Host Supremacy and Hmong Identity

Before the first arrivals of Southeast Asian refugees in the United States, some members of communities which were to host them had well-elaborated preconceptions of refugee helplessness. Many were less concerned with the fact that it was American involvement in Southeast Asia which had provoked the flood of refugees (cf. Suhrke 1980) than with whether or not refugees could be taught how to be Americans and whether, in the process, they would drain too much from the formal social support system.

The first cohort of Hmong to arrive were military elites and their families. Given their personal networks and familiarity in dealing with Americans, they had a unique experience of initial resettlement and were able to maintain some degree of occupational continuity. Their sponsorship of kin, coupled with the growth of a resettlement infrastructure, thereafter brought Hmong to the States at a rate of several thousand persons a year with peak numbers of arrivals in the years 1979-1981.

Successively arriving cohorts contained a smaller proportion of skilled, educated town or city dwellers while the proportion of less educated rural agriculturalists increased. This internal variation is significant in that individuals who are treated as if they were all the same are likely to experience considerable frustration in trying to make themselves understood as persons. Hosts also find their efforts complicated by the fact that those with different experience respond differently. De Vos (1976:353-4) has suggested that role expectations have immediate impact:

> The less we know about a person, the more we treat him in terms either of role expectations or of some larger diffuse concept of ethnicity which defines him for us. . . . In pluralistic societies minority group members encounter highly stereotyped role definitions imposed upon them by the majority culture.

In early contacts with Hmong, hosts often felt overcome with a great affection for those they met; this affection in turn was generalized to all Hmong. One social service provider described her experience as "having had a love affair with the Hmong people" ever since she met the first one. Bessac and Bessac (1982:58) interpret this

dynamic as follows:

> Wrapped in a haze of mystery, the Hmong charm and flatter us, calling Americans "mother and father of the Hmong people," asking advice and keeping everybody off balance with their unpredictability. This brings out, especially in American women, patronizing and missionizing instincts at once kindly and domineering.

Differentiation and Internal Homogeneity

What Bessac and Bessac call "instincts" can more appropriately be described as responses to interactions that operate according to cultural stereotypes and asymmetrical power positions. Hmong were adept at coping with these types of relationships even before they left Laos. What we see in the early stages of U.S. settlement may be described as the beginnings of a process of social differentiation already strongly informed by Hmong expectations about dealing with non-Hmong. This process bears a strong likeness to what Bateson, as early as 1935, called the process of "schismogenesis" or progressive differentiation (1935:181).

What Americans read about "The Hmong" served to reify and enhance stereotypes. An anthropologist writing in 1982 characterized them as unlike other refugees:

> Taking into account their traditional existence—slash and burn cultivation in the mountains of Laos and a subsistence economy supplemented by a cash crop of opium; a largely kinship-based social and political organization; tribal autonomy, both political and economic; a world view characterized by animism, shamanism and ancestor worship; and a language only recently written (by a missionary-linguist)—of the various Southeast Asian refugee groups the Hmong are culturally the most disparate from the receiving society. [Scott 1982:146]

In an article entitled "Hmong Refugees Need Special Help," a journalist and special adviser to the State Department's Refugee Ambassador suggested:

> After the United States pulled out of Southeast Asia in 1975, the Hmong were targeted by the Vietnamese government for extinction. Tens of thousands fled to Thailand and tens of thousands died trying. . . . In this country they are facing a very difficult transition. They are not like the more educated, westernized Vietnamese, for instance, and it is a big mistake to lump the Hmong together with them and other Southeast Asians in

> resettlement planning. . . . It's also an honor to work with people who gave so much for this country. If more of us would reach out, it would be a way to say thank you. We have not said thank you for their sacrifice. [Hamilton-Merritt 1983:B1]

A leading American news magazine expressed little hope that Hmong would ever integrate productively:

> The gene for adaptability is an elusive one; those who have it survive, those who lack it may not. The simple Hmong people, Laotian neighbors of the industrious Tai Dam, seem to have been passed by. Five years after several were settled in Providence, R.I., and in Selma, they are still living largely on welfare, still struggling to learn English. . . . The Hmong produce almost nothing of utilitarian value. All they make is Pa Ndau, squares of cloth embroidered with intricate geometric patterns somewhat like American patchwork quilts. The only virtue of Pa Ndau is that they are beautiful. Even in Laos, it had no economic function: the squares were exchanged as gifts, or used as burial cloths. A group of Providence women are trying to figure out how to market Pa Ndau, but it is difficult. "We had a meeting with the staff of Bloomingdale's and they wanted a definable product," one says. "Meanwhile the women are sitting at home making more squares." They don't quite fit in, like Hmong themselves. [Newsweek, July 7, 1980:34]

Reports range from sympathetic accounts of Hmong victimization as refugees to angry commentary about the added strain they put on already over-extended social programs. Whether charitable or critical, however, the message for Hmong self-image is the same. They are recipients who stand in an unequal position in relation to their benefactors. Unable, under present circumstances, to repay their economic debt, they feel compelled instead to exhibit the deference of a subordinate by conforming to the values and interests of their donors.

In addition to submissiveness exhibited toward Americans perceived as dominant, Hmong adopted a strategy based on the management of symbols to differentiate themselves from other Asian-Americans and even from other Southeast Asian refugees. Not only were they "highland tribals" with a "unique" history of persecution, but they also had been America's special friends, "sacrificing" themselves to help fight the spread of communism in Southeast Asia. Despite their heterogeneity, managing this image entailed acquiescence to being perceived in terms of a homogeneous cultural identity as "Hmong" (cf. Goldstein 1978:410). While this identification was

instrumental in fostering charitable attitudes and investments from "hosts," it gave rise to much ambivalence, especially for young people in school who were more intimately aware of its stigmatized aspects.

Hmong have their own style of discourse, in which their position vis-à-vis their hosts is conveyed orally. I have at times encountered it upon first meeting with refugees who regard me as a potential benefactor. It translates roughly as follows: "We Hmong people are very poor. Since we came to this country, we don't know how to speak. We don't know the way to go. We don't know the way of working. We miss our country, where everything's free. Can you help our people?"

Dependence and Distortion

At first Hmong and Americans exchanged representations of self and each other almost as "prestations" or gifts to seal the relationship. As dichotomization progressed, they developed ritualized forms of interaction, highly structured and likewise highly distorting. Distortion was possible not only because of feedback between the groups, but also because the complementary "personalities" adopted were perceived on both sides as instrumental. Hmong saw economic security and social tolerance as linked to their elaboration of the dependent personality; members of the receiving society, by maintaining their parent-like cultural ascendancy, gained a stronger sense of self and also found a range of economic opportunities in social services and planning. American hosts derived from the presence of Hmong supplicants a special vitality and experience of identity.

Bateson (1936:187-8) held that while such complementarity of relationship could obtain indefinitely, it will have several consequences:

> The members of each group see the stunted parts of their own affective life fully developed—indeed overdeveloped—in the members of the opposite group. It is in such situations that mutual envy arises.

American "envy" in this case took the form of romanticizing images of what were taken to be the traditional life and ethos the Hmong brought with them. One social service provider explained the basis of her attraction to Hmong as "They're such wonderful *simple* people." The obverse, for the Hmong, was the development of forms of hostility which were comparable in intensity to their envy of the superior social and economic position of Americans. Hostility was undoubtedly connected with the aim to preserve the intactness of their

own group in the face of strong outside pressures. Perhaps the most lurid and poignant expressions of the effort to resist incorporation are to be found in messages sent back on cassette tapes to kin in Thai refugee camps. Relatives and friends have been cautioned not to resettle in the States because Americans have the practice of eating Hmong babies. Berreman considered such expressions of hostility by the Aleuts he studied in Nikolski to be also demonstrations of commitment to membership in their own group (1964:234). So it is with the Hmong in the States. They emphasize their dependence and innocence to obtain help and at the same time resent the terms on which help is forthcoming.

Migration to the Central Valley

Moving Away and Moving Toward

It is still too early to predict whether movement to the Valley indicates the breakdown of a system of "complementary schismogenesis" or whether it may be considered to be a very advanced, stable state of differentiation involving less and less communication between the two parties. In what follows I consider these two possibilities in light of what Hmong said they wanted from the move and what the actual outcomes have been.

Hmong gave several reasons for their decision to move to the Valley. There was and continues to be a strong desire to farm. Farming is attractive because it is an occupation at which they already feel competent. They also envisioned it as a means to eventual economic autonomy in small-scale enterprises owned and controlled by themselves. Furthermore, the Central Valley setting was a prime alternative to the cold, densely populated urban settings in the Northeast and Northwest where many had been resettled. Members of the older generations in particular characterized their living conditions in low-income neighborhoods, with relatively high cost of living and piercing cold weather several months of the year, as almost intolerable. In the Valley, streets were not too crowded, women were learning to drive, old people could walk from home to supermarket or to visit kin without much fear of violence. Year-round warmth and considerably more space also meant that most families could have backyard gardens in which to grow specialty produce. All this was communicated by tapes, letters, and phone calls through the Hmong network. Some early expectations were not met but this did not stop the influx.

Over the course of the first years of settlement (1977-79), ambitious Hmong migrants confronted severe limitations on agricultural possibilities. Valley agriculture is dominated by agribusiness with tight control of markets. Lack of markets, land, and the capital to work it blocked Hmong efforts to become independent farmers, while as wage laborers they had to compete with sizable numbers of migrant laborers who seasonally flow into the area. Yet, even when the realities of the agricultural situation had been perceived, other advantages including climate, the ready availability of public assistance, and a growing number of social programs caused the Valley to remain a desirable choice of residence.

These were the reasons for choosing the Central Valley. But the Hmong had other reasons for a secondary migration which would bring them together as a community. Here their behavior is much like that of any war-scattered refugees, and is not specifically Hmong. Probably the most common reason given for the decision to come to Merced was family reunification. Most refugee Lao-Hmong say they suffer from an acute and continuing sense of loss of loved ones, in most cases, of immediate kin. A common response to this painful situation is to seek out even distant relatives whose geographic proximity gains in importance insofar as they replace those now lost. They also take solace in a familiar social environment where most day-to-day interactions take place among "cousins" or with other Hmong who share the same past. Several said that their problems in employment had arisen directly out of an inability to suppress their "sadness" in order to concentrate. They felt almost as though they could function only when surrounded by their own people, by people who "understand." Another accumulated pain comes from having been scattered by seemingly arbitrary circumstances and across long distances. Joining together in a community of several thousand co-ethnics may have been a response to the overwhelming sense of dispersal and separation that refugee Lao-Hmong feel most acutely upon making the decision for third-country resettlement.

Advanced Differentiation

A protracted period of dependence not only contributes to loss of self-respect and a sense of helplessness, but also interrupts economic routines as a result of being severed from engagement in subsistence production. The period of actual lethargy may be very brief, followed quickly by adoption of replacement activities, but the temporary vacuum appears to be a vital determinant of the amount of

value placed upon alternative activities. Loss of land and life-style may contribute to an emphasis on "cultural preservation." Dependence and noninvolvement in production then provide conditions under which a kind of cultural "revivalism" can flower.

In the Central Valley, Hmong are devoting much time to cultural activities which they regard as Hmong. If dichotomization of roles between Hmong and hosts is moving toward greater stability, we would expect to see an increasing social insularity concomitant with an exaggeration of cultural differences.

From the Hmong point of view, enclavement and lack of participation in employment have internal functions in terms of the desire for "cultural preservation" and the creation of social networks alluded to above. Hmong in Merced have created neighborhood, extended family, and church organizations as well as an official mutual-assistance agency which provides ongoing resettlement aid and emergency services such as interpreting in a crisis or taking up collections for funeral expenses. Young people have started several Hmong music groups which compose and play Hmong songs—some traditional, some popular, some religious—and record them for distribution primarily among their peers. The local radio station has donated a slot of air time on Sunday mornings which Hmong representatives are free to use for refugee community programming.

Refugees all over the Valley and even all over California are frequently occupied in visiting and other forms of communication. It is common to encounter a visiting relative from Fresno or Santa Ana in a Merced Hmong household or to find that the head of household is not at home because he has gone to Stockton or San Francisco. Ceremonial events such as weddings or funerals are also reunions where important functions can be performed because of the presence of community members with the requisite knowledge or skills.

Insularity is encouraged by both the size and density of Valley settlements. In Merced, the most extreme example, refugees, totaling nearly 6,000, constitute nearly 13 percent of the town's total population. They occupy whole blocks of tract housing. It is therefore possible for Hmong to visit or transact business with neighbors and kin without ever going out on the street. Enclavement allows not only for a greater sense of internal cohesion, but also for more controlled and formalized interactions with outsiders. It remains to be seen whether the insularity and cultural involvement found in the Valley indicates stabilizing of these interactions or transition away from them.

Breakdown as a Precondition to Transition

Hmong recognize that their present economic arrangement vis-à-vis their "hosts" has the potential to assume a kind of caste-like stability. In this case, their reliance on public aid would, in the eyes of higher ranking groups, result in classification with the poor and "morally inferior" members of American society. If the Valley movement indicates a breakdown of the progressive process which opposes submissive Hmong recipients to dominant hosts, we would expect Hmong attempts to disrupt the highly stylized and distorted communication which now exists. We would expect Hmong in the Valley to use insularity to reestablish their own membership group as their primary reference through claims to cultural superiority and the creation of independent economic networks. If the schismogenic system was breaking down, the deference offered interactionally by Hmong refugees would become restricted to what Fredrik Barth called "token prestation" (1966:8). In this case, Hmong would use impression management to convey outward acquiescence to a subordinate position. Among themselves, however, they would maintain that their status as political refugees coupled with the "unique" challenge they face in cultural adjustment exonerates them from moral responsibility in continuing to receive aid, at the same time that they join together in efforts toward economic independence and regaining a sense of dignity.

The Valley aggregations permit the emergence of a more self-sustaining and enclosed system that has strong economic aspects. Graves and Graves (1974:140) noted that in largely unfamiliar environments the search for predictability and control "tends to encourage the migrant to select adaptive strategies which involve kinsmen and co-ethnics." Hmong migrants have clearly adopted this type of strategy in two forms: cooperation and enterprise. The size of the Valley communities enables a proportionate amount of cooperation. In Merced, Hmong save gas and money by running errands for each other, purchasing food in bulk, and carpooling. They share information about jobs, programs, and training opportunities and about location and availability of resources in the larger community. They also share techniques for handling the "organizational encounters" necessary for procuring and managing such resources (Lanphier 1983:17).

The large number of co-ethnics in the community allows refugee businesspeople and service providers to operate within an exclusively Hmong economic system. In Merced alone, six "Hmong stores" offer specialty goods and produce, though refugees sell their goods through

the local flea market as well. The only licensed Hmong dentist in the United States migrated to Merced, saying that he decided to be where he could serve his own people. Numerous exchanges of goods and services take place on an informal basis. A sense of common expectations and mutual trust prevails when co-ethnics do business together, especially because no language barrier generates misunderstandings. Such enterprises represent a choice of economic niche which avoids competition with the resident labor force (Graves and Graves 1974:136).

In light of both social and economic factors, the Valley settlements may be understood as innovations in the use of contrast (cf. DeVos and Romanucci-Ross 1982:368). Life in the Valley not only reduces intensity of contact with outsiders, but also enables a greater control over the *contents* of contrast, checking the trend toward internalization of the role of stigmatized and dependent minority. While from the macro policy perspective of the hosts the Valley migration may have enhanced this latter attribution, from the Hmong perspective, there is strong evidence that it has served to diminish it.

On Going Back

Most of the processes described above seem decidedly like retrogression and indeed that is how they are interpreted by many observers concerned over the apparent interruption in Hmong "progress" toward integration. Rumors and allegations are rife among non-Hmong to the effect that the migration was compelled by interested national or local elites seeking to regain former positions of leadership and to encourage people to organize for an eventual return to Laos, by peaceful or military means. While there is some indication that such maneuvering takes place on the level of discourse, there is little evidence to support the inference that the Valley is perceived as the first step toward returning "home." Hmong with whom I spoke seemed remarkably content in their Valley lifestyle, far more accepting of the prospect of long-term residence in the States than Hmong in other settlements.

In a study of Vietnamese refugees in Colorado, Piscarowicz and Tosher (1982:76) found that residence in a close-knit ethnic community was negatively correlated with desire to return to Vietnam. The findings were based on a comparison between this group, settled in Sun Valley, and "non-community" Vietnamese in Denver, who had higher achievements in language skills and economic status, but were less satisfied with their present situation (ibid.:75). Satisfaction

appears to be a function of the refugees' reference group; whereas those living in Sun Valley ensured similarity of background and status by restricting interactions to those with co-ethnics, the Denver residents who interacted with many reference groups saw themselves falling into an inferior status and felt a consequent lack of fulfillment. In light of such findings, the ethnic enclave may be regarded as a kind of "staging area" in which a migrant gains help, practical information, and psychological security to prepare for movement into the larger community (Bernard 1977:273).

Conservation and Innovation

It is more than likely that Hmong secondary migration to form communities in the Valley is a part of what Scudder and Colson (1982), in their framework for analysis of dislocated people, called the "transition stage." This transition is generally characterized by turning inward, clinging to the familiar, taking a conservative stance, and behaving as if one's sociocultural system were closed (ibid.:273-4). The process was termed by Scudder as "cultural involution," a phrase that aptly describes the intensity of Hmong "cultural" activities in Valley settlements.

The move to the Valley provides an important sense of security, especially for the elderly. Skilled ritualists, herbalists, healers, and "matchmakers" are all present in the area so one doesn't have to fear that needs cannot be met by traditional means. From the point of view of the older generation, the wide range of human resources in such a large community ensures that children can observe and be instructed in valued nuances and aspects of "traditional" culture. The large and self-encapsulating Valley communities also provide a social environment in which the Hmong language is kept up alongside English and marriage partners are easy to find.

Why should such a voluntary and apparently conservative relocation take place only after several years of resettlement in the States? I maintain that a process of progressive social differentiation became a strong canalizing force motivating Hmong refugees to "regroup." Only after the initial experiences of U.S. resettlement—the loneliness and chill of northern, urban residence, the frustrations of growing economic insecurity under the Reagan administration, the dissatisfaction with entry-level jobs, and finally the message from teachers, media, sponsors and others that they just couldn't quite fit in—would some Hmong have adopted the strategy of Valley enclavement. For-

mulated originally in economic terms, as the agricultural solution to unemployment and anticipated welfare cut-offs, the Valley alternative eventually came to be seen as the palliative to manifold resettlement ills, not the least of which was the entrapment in "cultural inferiority" that contact with non-Hmong seemed only to reinforce. The move was at once conservative, an attempt to restore that which had been lost in years of war and stressful relocation, and at the same time innovative, providing alternative means of coping with such stress (cf. Peterson 1958:258).

Conclusion

Lao-Hmong arrived in the States with much more than the consciousness of refugee status and the anticipation of a period of continuing dependence. They also brought with them a full repertoire of experiences in managing interactions with representatives of a larger society, a recent history of residence in large aggregations, and an acute and profound sense of loss not to be ameliorated in a few years, or even a decade. Upon arrival, they learned quickly that resettlement policy could be influenced to correspond with their perceived needs. Culture became the argument for, and the rationalization of, ongoing reliance on external aid. Media, scholarly and government reports, as well as other modes of discourse became the forum for the expression and consolidation of cultural differences. "Hosts" commonly experienced not only a sense of cultural superiority, but also raw political and economic strength in the face of Hmong utterances such as "We are your children." As Hmong were quick to perceive the benefits of being parented, they continued to respond with childlike deference to host paternalism.

Such display of deference eventually takes its toll since it implies acquiescence to a position of powerlessness not consonant with Hmong aims at self-determination. As a sophisticated and bureaucratic resettlement infrastructure grew up around every large Hmong settlement, their lives were increasingly managed and planned for in ways that were undoubtedly experienced as intervention. Some, especially young bilingual elites, learned to exploit these institutional frameworks to the benefit of themselves, their extended kin networks, and sometimes their communities. Others, often those who benefited least, began to look for alternative opportunities, and to turn inward in an effort to reduce the stress of feeling incompetent in their present setting.

What is realized in the Valley enclavement is a far greater sense of control over day-to-day life based not only on continuing welfare dependence which allows more time for "cultural" activities, but also on the insularity attained in such populous groupings. Under these circumstances, deference to donor norms and ascendancy can be a compartmentalized activity, a "token prestation" in the presence of the donor, while a sense of greater self-determination can be achieved internally among co-ethnics.

Finally, it is imperative to avoid myopia in generalizing about "The Hmong," for it is their diversity that most confounds simplistic interpretation. Most Hmong never left China. Of those who were in Laos during the war era, only an estimated half sided against the communist Pathet Lao, and of those only some fled to become refugees after 1975. Of these, about a third remain in Thailand, the country of first asylum, whereas two thirds have chosen resettlement in various Western countries. Hmong in the States have pursued an array of strategies in response to the particulars of their personal situation, their first resettlement site, and the changing exigencies of the years since relocation. In fact, the first Hmong settler in Merced came almost as a pioneer, with a handful of family members and the intention of finding a place to make a quiet life as a farmer, without a large community of his people and without the stigma of the dependent, helpless refugee. What eventually became a large-scale movement of sociological and policy interest, he still characterizes as a haphazard collection of discrete decisions in which different families and individuals came for their own separate reasons (personal communication 1983).

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6

Dealing with Frustration: A Study of Interactions Between Resettlement Staff and Refugees

Steven J. Gold

Introduction

Many difficulties arise in interactions between refugees and their resettlement staff. The interactions have a built-in potential to generate frustration. Clients and staff alike experience it under a wide variety of circumstances. Frustration arises because of the near impossibility of the task at hand: delivering elusive elements of majority social membership on demand. No matter how well funded a resettlement agency nor how skillful its staff, the major goals of resettlement—economic self-sufficiency and cultural adjustment—are difficult to attain. Economic self-sufficiency is dependent upon economic factors beyond any resettlement worker's control. Similarly, cultural adjustment, learning English, and resolving the mental trauma brought on by the refugee experience can only be achieved through the efforts of refugees themselves, expended over protracted periods of time.

While resettlement is by nature a frustrating activity, other factors also lead to conflict between staff and clients, thus making their interactions even more difficult. Staff and the refugees they serve suffer from: 1) the mutual degradation experienced by parties to failed interactions (Goffman 1952,1967), 2) problems of cultural incompatibility between staff and clients (AACMHTC 1981; Dorf and Katlin 1983; Nguyen and Henkin 1984; Schiff 1980; Gitelman 1978), 3) moral difficulties inherent in the "giver-receiver" relationship of service provision (de Voe 1981), 4) conflicts over the means of accomplishing resettlement (Glazer and Moynihan 1963; Gorelick 1982; Rischin 1962), and 5) political disputes which arise between the

offerers and recipients of services (Whyte 1955; Lyman 1974; Buchanan 1979; Sway 1982; Habarad 1984).

The discussion which follows concerns strategies adopted by Soviet Jewish and Vietnamese refugees and their respective resettlement staffs for dealing with frustration and accomplishing goals they feel are worthwhile. Soviet Jews and Vietnamese were chosen as the subjects of this study because they are large in number and share enough similarities and differences to yield interesting comparisons. The Vietnamese are the most numerous and the Soviet Jews the third largest refugee groups to enter the United States since 1975 (ORR 1982:15, 1984:A-15). The two groups have a significant number of individuals with urban experience and secondary education, making comparison appropriate (Finnan 1981:305). At the same time, the two groups have major differences in their past experiences with bureaucratic agencies and are resettled by vastly different systems in the U.S.

Data for this report were obtained through participant observation and in-depth interviews (see table 1). I spent 17 months as a participant observer in 2 Vietnamese resettlement agencies and 7 months in a Soviet Jewish resettlement agency. In-depth interviews were carried out with 35 staff members of 16 agencies which resettle Vietnamese and 13 staff members of 8 resettlement agencies aiding Soviet Jews. For the refugees' view of resettlement, I draw on formal and informal interviews and participant observation with 51 Soviet Jewish and 66 Vietnamese refugees. Quotes in this paper are taken directly from taped interviews.

Table 1
Resettlement Staff: Numbers of Subjects Interviewed

Clientele	Vietnamese	Soviet Jews
Number of Agencies in Bay Area	40	6
Agencies Contacted	13 Bay Area 2 Seattle 1 Orange County	6 Bay Area 2 West Los Angeles
Total Staff Interviewed	35	13
Total Refugees Interviewed	66	51
Total Numbers of Refugees In The Bay Area	30,000[a]	6,000[b]

[a]ORR 1983
[b]Kipperman 1982

The Refugee Service Delivery Establishment

Since the mid-1970s, a number of programs have been enacted by Congress to address the needs of refugees. Perhaps the most important of these is the Refugee Act of 1980 (Public Law 96-212). This legislation was intended, in part, to provide "transitional assistance to refugees in the United States," to make "employment training and job placement available in order to achieve economic self-sufficiency among refugees as quickly as possible," to offer refugees English language training, and to insure "that cash assistance is made available to refugees in such a manner as to not discourage their economic self-sufficiency" (sec. 311 quoted in Murray 1981:1). The services funded by the Refugee Act of 1980 as well as other legislation are delivered and administered by a diverse network of government, religious, and non-profit and profit-making organizations. In addition to services funded by federal, state, and local government, non-public funds support resettlement activities as well.

A major role in the resettlement of refugees has been taken by 13 voluntary agencies or "VOLAGS" with funding from the federal government (ORR 1984:ix). The largest number of Vietnamese are resettled by the United States Catholic Conference (USCC). Nearly all Soviet Jews as well as some Southeast Asians have been resettled by the Hebrew Immigration Aid Service (HIAS) (Eckles et al. 1982:27).

Services available to Soviet Jewish and Vietnamese refugees from their resettlement agencies include job training, job placement, physical and mental health programs, instruction on cultural adjustment and cultural preservation, English as a second language, and assistance in opening small businesses. While services are theoretically available to all refugees, the ability of any given refugee to benefit from such services is directly dependent upon his or her relations with resettlement staff. Only those refugees willing and able to interact with staff can utilize services. Ironically, the one service the refugees value most—refugee cash assistance (RCA)—is the only service not offered through resettlement agencies. Instead, RCA is distributed by the County Welfare Department.

There is a major contrast between the agencies which provide service to Soviet Jewish refugees and those resettling Vietnamese. In the San Francisco Bay Area as well as other large American cities, Soviet Jewish resettlement agencies are highly centralized and integrated, long established, well funded, and few in number. While the resettlement of Soviet Jews is administered by HIAS, community-

based services are generally available from three agencies: 1) the Jewish Family and Children's Service provides counseling, financial aid, and case management; 2) the Jewish Vocational Service offers job placement and occasionally job training; and 3) the Jewish Community Center makes available social and recreational activities. Several synagogues and a Jewish home for the aged also work with refugees. These agencies are supported to a fairly large extent by funds from Jewish charities and are therefore subject to ideological control by the charities which provide these funds. Employees of the three agencies usually have an MSW or other professional degree. They deal with immediate needs such as housing and health care as well as longer-term concerns of religious education and cultural enrichment. Since they are not solely devoted to the problems of refugees, they employ few émigrés as resettlement workers.

Over 40 agencies are involved in resettling Vietnamese refugees in San Francisco alone, with 15 or more in surrounding counties (Murray 1981:3). The large number is inefficient in terms of coordination and allocation of funding and sometimes creates inter-agency competition and hostility. Because Vietnamese agencies are numerous, decentralized, and overlapping (Finnan and Cooperstein 1983), their employees have more opportunity to utilize their positions for their own ideological purposes than is the case for resettlement staffs working with Soviet Jews. However, while Vietnamese resettlement staff experience limited ideological control "from above," they constantly face the bureaucratic guidelines and masses of "paper shuffling" required by funding agencies. Vietnamese agencies, in contrast to those resettling Soviet Jews, have fewer professional staff and are subject to severe problems of funding. They generally provide only short-term survival-type aid. Because most are directed specifically towards the problems of Southeast Asian refugees, they have been in existence 8 or fewer years. Their staffs usually include several refugees.

Administration of Vietnamese agencies is typically disorganized. The *California State Plan for Refugee Assistance and Services, 1983* is directly critical of federal refugee resettlement policy, claiming it is a "patchwork program" causing states and counties to "constantly contend with operational confusion, inconsistencies and inefficiencies" leading to "inflexibilities, inequities and administrative problems" (ORS 1983:7-8). The "patchwork program" causes agencies to "overlap with or duplicate the services" provided by other agencies or the State and "appears to work against a coordinated effort" (ORS 1983:7-9). The problems created by lack of coordination are

heightened as resettlement agencies are faced with the unstable and declining base of financial support. Reductions in funding are caused by overall cutbacks in federal social programs and the substantial reduction in the numbers of refugees entering the U.S. since the peak of 1979 to 1981.

While both Soviet Jewish and Vietnamese agencies are affected by the reduction of incoming refugees, the resulting cut-backs are far worse for Vietnamese agencies which cannot rely on a high level of private funding (see table 2).

Table 2
Decreasing Numbers of Soviet Jewish and Vietnamese Refugees[a]

Refugee Group	Number of Refugees Annual Average 1979-1981 (peak years)	Number of Refugees Year of 1982-1983	Percent Reduction
Soviet Jews	33,168	4,165	87%
Southeast Asians	149,742	39,167	74%

[a]Source: ORR 1984: A-1, B-5

Refugee Reactions to Interactions with Resettlement Agencies

The great majority of refugees I interviewed were highly motivated to achieve some form of success in the United States. Soviets and Vietnamese alike repeatedly described themselves as flexible survivors. Some utilize their own networks and avoid the agencies. Others have developed strategies to deal with resettlement staff which enable them to benefit from services available without becoming dependent, hostile, or obliged to engage in undesired activities. A number of refugees seem to be able to "work the system," combining the services of agencies with community resources. In this, both sets of refugees are alike, but they otherwise differ in their specific goals.

Vietnamese Reactions to Resettlement Agencies

Vietnamese refugees were reluctant to become involved with resettlement agencies. Recent arrivals frequently commented that those running such agencies, Vietnamese or not, had selfish motives. In interviews, recent arrivals recalled being yelled at by employment counselors, overcharged by health workers, verbally chastised by English teachers, and ignored in their requests for aid in sponsoring relatives. Rumors were exchanged among recent arrivals which

characterized job-training programs as means of exploiting refugee labor. Despite the fact that a major problem faced by recent arrivals is finding employment, many were uninterested in using the employment referral services they knew existed.

One reason Vietnamese are uncomfortable with and unimpressed by resettlement agencies is that they compare the benefits and style of service delivery offered by agencies with those available through their own networks of friends and relatives. These networks provide many forms of emotional and economic support in the context of personalistic and trust-based interactions. Most recent arrivals I interviewed found the quality of service available through their own networks superior to that obtained from agencies. Out of 27 recent arrivals, only 7 had utilized the services of resettlement agencies in the last year. Of these, 5 had used agencies for employment or job training and 2 had used them for aid in filling out applications to sponsor the entry of relatives into the U.S. Many of those who had used resettlement services in the last year or earlier had negative evaluations of the services they received. Many quit the jobs or training programs they had been referred to, claiming they were unacceptable. A refugee who had found good jobs for himself both in Ohio and California explained his avoidance of refugee-aid agencies: "I got laid off of my job at the computer company. I don't need to go to USCC to find a job. I need to go around by myself to apply for good work. If you don't go by yourself, you can't get a good job." Vietnamese refugees who do utilize the services of resettlement agencies often reveal their ambivalence about such services in lax attendance at appointments, training programs, and agency-referred jobs. This behavior contrasts strongly with the diligence and punctuality inspired by activities considered to be worthwhile, such as social visits or desired employment.

Not all recent arrivals reject the services available through the agencies. Some develop skill in "working the system" and combine the services and information available from several agencies as well as informal networks in order to maintain a high standard of living. A few maintain addresses in different cities or counties in order to maximize the mix of available benefits. Others remain within the law but are also adept at obtaining services. For example, Loc had job applications on file at 2 job-placement services and attended a paying job-training program sponsored by a third "CETA" agency in early 1983. Loc's preschool-age daughter attended a day-care center at a local church, thus freeing Loc to attend classes and Mrs. Loc to work at a restaurant. Mrs. Loc was on the waiting list for a paying training program for clerical workers. Loc knew of several sources of medical and

dental treatment for his daughter. He intermittently attended an evening English class at a local community college which provided him with numerous social contacts as well as language training. Loc also maintained many contacts with friends and relatives. Through informal social connections, he obtained enough capital to open a restaurant and put on a large wedding for his younger sister. Family connections were also a source of child care for Loc's daughter on evenings and weekends. Interestingly, Loc was able to maintain these many formal and informal relationships despite a level of competence in English which made a phone conversation difficult and filling out the State of California short income tax form impossible.

A network of recently arrived refugees of which Loc was a member maintained a consensus on which needs were best filled through contacts with resettlement agencies and which were better satisfied via personal contacts. They agreed that job referral and job-training programs offered by resettlement agencies were of little value. They explained that training programs took too long and often offered "skills" which were useless, such as sewing machine operation or janitorial training. Job referrals available from resettlement agencies were usually minimum wage, part time and offered few opportunities for advancement. Also, if a refugee quit or refused to accept an agency-referred job, he or she would be subject to reprimands or denied eligibility for further referrals. These disadvantages made recent arrivals view agencies as a poor source of employment information.

On the other hand, recent arrivals generally found day-care, immigration, and sponsorship services valuable. Such services helped them save both time and money. They were staffed by Vietnamese speakers who did not have the authoritarian style recent arrivals associated with employment-related programs. Well over half the Vietnamese clients I worked with at the San Francisco church-sponsored resettlement office came to obtain aid in completing various documents. Most common were applications to sponsor the immigration of relatives in refugee camps, green-card applications, and releases required for arrivals from other states to receive RCA or AFDC.

The art of working the system of refugee agencies reaches its highest level among a small group of Vietnamese who develop relationships with agencies and their staff in order to secure employment as service providers. This pattern is most common among two groups: Chinese-Vietnamese who are trilingual in English, Chinese (Cantonese or Mandarin), and Vietnamese, and Vietnamese activists who have college degrees. Multilingual refugees have skills needed by the staff of agencies. For example, Thuy Chau, a 19-year-old Chinese-

Vietnamese refugee who had finished high school and one year of junior college in the U.S., realized the employment potential in her language and clerical skills. By working as a volunteer in a resettlement office, she developed contacts with its staff. Her contacts were instrumental to her being hired to a comfortable job at a resettlement office with a $1200-a-month salary, a far better position than would be generally available to a refugee of her age and education. Other Vietnamese refugees with college degrees had a similar pattern of developing contacts with agencies through volunteer work which ultimately resulted in full-time employment. These jobs may be insecure because of the unstable nature of agency funding, but the contacts are also useful for obtaining work if one's own agency is a victim of cutbacks.

In summary, many Vietnamese refugees are uncomfortable with and suspicious of resettlement agencies and their staff, and tend to avoid them. This is in part because of discomfort with bureaucratic encounters and in part because the bureaucracy is less successful than their own networks in providing services. However, some Vietnamese learn to "work the system" in order to obtain a good quality of life and, in some cases, employment.

Soviet Jewish Reactions to Resettlement Agencies

Soviet Jewish refugees react in many ways like the Vietnamese to the problems which arise in their interactions with resettlement staff. However, due to the different characteristics and needs of Soviet émigrés and the greater resources of their resettlement agencies, certain distinctive problems are created.

One major source of friction arises from the difference between Soviet and American norms for interactions with officials. This contrast is documented by Zvi Gitelman who surveyed 1,161 ex-Soviet citizens (Jews and non-Jews) about bureaucratic encounters (Gitelman n.d.:8). Gitelman claims that because the lower-level Soviet officials who deal with citizens are trapped between demanding clientele and powerful upper-level bureaucrats, a high degree of flexibility and personalism is tolerated as a means for easing pressure. As a result, Soviet citizens and bureaucrats alike are accustomed to a style of particularistic service which is subject to various forms of influence (Smith 1976:60-61). Gitelman found that when frustrated in their encounters with officials, Soviet citizens attempted to influence outcomes by bribery, demanding to see management and by utilizing "blat" (influence and connections). I found that Soviet approaches to problems with officials were often maintained by émigrés in the

United States. Many émigrés interpreted the actions of the Jewish Vocational Service in light of their experience with the Soviet employment agency *Raspredelenie*. Drawing on Soviet experience, those who were not immediately referred to jobs of their own liking believed that the agency could refer them to jobs but refused to do so. Some then attempted to bribe staff directly or offered contributions to the Jewish Federation.

Other émigrés attempted to obtain what they wanted via political influence. This was especially so among middle-aged, highly educated professionals from Moscow, many of whom claimed to have had valuable connections in the USSR. For example, I taught a course in job-finding to a group of ex-Muscovite engineers. During each of the first four meetings of the class, different participants would mention that the best way for all of them to find jobs would be to apply influence with the right persons:

> All of this training, it's no good. This is what we should do. Do you know the director of the Jewish Federation? Does he make appointments with people like us? We will talk to him. He could go to the president of big engineering company, Jewish president, and tell him to hire some of us. There are only a few of us. He could hire one of us each week.

While some Soviet Jews try to solve difficulties which arise in their interactions with resettlement agencies through methods like bribery and "blat" which were retained from the USSR, others, like many Vietnamese refugees, learn to work the system and combine selected services from agencies with those from other sources to maintain the highest possible standard of living. Like the Vietnamese, Soviet Jews exchange information within their communities and subgroups to determine the best sources for satisfying various needs.

Because they were able to satisfy many needs through intimate connections, many Soviet Jews berated the agencies. Those who regularly used resettlement agency services tended to belong to the highly dependent aged and teenager categories. The rest considered resettlement services to be an alternative which is "better than nothing, but not great." Soviet Jews could be quite direct in expressing the minimal value they place upon services. This has been reported by other researchers. For example, a social worker describes an émigré's reaction to therapy sessions: "I like you. You're a nice lady and this way I can practice my English. But I don't really understand how talking about this will help me" (Dorf and Katlin 1983:152).

Agencies may also be deprecated because, in their desire to

assimilate, many émigrés view the act of standing in line to collect agency-provided benefits as a shameful, Soviet-style activity. Many émigrés claimed that they wanted to become "real Americans" who go out and make things happen on their own. For example, one Soviet Jew searched for work with the help of the Jewish vocational service and, after 8 months, was finally placed in a job. Up to the day he began working, he continued to search for another job on his own, and after being employed at the job the agency found him for about 6 months, he finally found himself a better-paying job.

In summary, Soviet Jews initially interpret their interactions with American resettlement agencies through the lens of their experiences with Soviet officials. When frustrated, many consider the use of Soviet-style methods of obtaining desired outcomes—bribery and influence. Like the Vietnamese, Soviet émigrés learn to work the system of agencies in order to obtain the best quality of service from several alternatives. Because reliance on agencies is seen by many as a Soviet rather than American practice, certain refugees seek to avoid interactions with agencies and their staff altogether. However, school-aged and elderly émigrés place higher value on resettlement services, because, like their American counterparts, they have few alternative means for accomplishing goals and filling empty hours.

Staff Reactions to Refugee Resettlement Interactions

While it takes time for Soviet Jewish and Vietnamese refugees to understand the role of the resettlement agency, many are encouraged to find that the agency exists to provide them with services. Furthermore, some members of both populations believe their refugee status entitles them to "V.I.P." treatment. As such, clients demand from agencies the services for which they feel the greatest need. In many cases, these services involve finding a desirable job, obtaining United States credentials or licenses for their profession, gaining information on how to approach important interactions, such as how to behave in a job interview, and filling financial needs—more money, a bigger apartment, etc.

As noted earlier, most of these needs depend upon factors beyond the resettlement worker's control, such as the job market, the availability of resettlement funds, or the refugee's own psychosocial adjustment. Hence, resettlement workers are unable to provide many of the most-desired services. When client-defined needs are not

readily provided, resettlement staff are subject to being discredited and/or ignored by refugees. As a result, resettlement workers adopt numerous strategies which allow them to face refugees and the problems of serving them on a day-to-day basis. However, two were most common: redefining the work and developing constituencies.

Redefining Refugee Work

Many strategies adopted by resettlement staff to avoid the frustration and imputations of incompetence when they are unable to satisfy clients involved redefining the role of resettlement worker to include activities which are more satisfying or rewarding. This allowed workers to sustain an image of competence. One strategy involves concentrating on the religious and ideological socialization of refugees as a major part of resettlement work. A second strategy, maintained by resettlement workers with training in counseling techniques, especially those with MSW degrees, emphasized providing therapy to refugee clientele.

Many Vietnamese resettlement agencies maintain an agenda for ideological socialization. They are involved in such activities as cultural preservation, political socialization, and the development of "economic self-sufficiency." Drawing on the Vietnamese concept of face (reputation) and duty to family and nation, Vietnamese employees instruct clients to study hard, avoid welfare if possible, stay out of legal trouble, support their family, remember "their roots," and be an asset to American society. A Vietnamese resettlement worker comments:

> When I came here, I realized the most important thing for a person to [do was to] quickly get along with the society. We are proud that we came here. We are not a burden on the American community. We make a contribution to this society. Also, on the other hand, we can help our family who are still staying in Vietnam. So I agree with the government policy: try to do our best to get the refugee to help themselves.

The importance placed on ethnic/religious socialization by Soviet Jewish resettlement staff is perhaps even stronger than the ideological element in Vietnamese resettlement activities. The entire program of resettlement for Soviet Jews is directed towards client's religious needs (real or merely hoped for). From their time of exit from the USSR, Soviet Jews are encouraged to participate in religious activities and to plan the location and style of their resettlement on the basis of religious values (Panish 1981). In the U.S., families are invited to

participate in Jewish Community Centers, synagogues, Hebrew Schools and Jewish camps free of charge.

Resettlement workers are expected to share this concern with Jewish socialization. For example, before I was put in contact with an émigré family as a volunteer English teacher, the representative of the local Jewish resettlement agency made sure that I was a Jew and was willing to discuss basic aspects of Judaism as part of English training. The high value placed upon Jewish socialization in refugee resettlement is revealed in many recent articles in the *Journal of Jewish Communal Service*. Many contributors express concern over the Soviet Jews coming to the U.S. instead of going to Israel, calling these émigrés "noshrim" (dropouts) (Jacobson 1978). Other articles in the same journal propose to provide émigrés with various forms of "Jewish programming." For example, a Nashville rabbi is quoted: "Rabbi Posner says we have to 'create a Jewish need in him' just as we would with a child, while at the same time understanding that this is no child. . . . It is a matter of retraining, he says, just as you would retrain someone for suitable employment" (Goldberg 1981:161). In another article, an author argues:

> It is absolutely essential to exploit ESL [English as a second language] classes . . . where they are actually a captive audience . . . for inculcating Jewish attitudes and values . . . to foster a positive Jewish self-concept while developing Jewish cognition, Jewish language expression and Jewish life skills. [Schiff 1980:45-49]

Many of the resettlement staff I interviewed were extremely uncomfortable with this element of their task.

Because all of the non-refugee staff of Soviet Jewish resettlement agencies I interviewed held, or were in the process of obtaining the MSW degree, they were subject to professional norms of universalism, detachment, confidentiality, and client-directed service. Resettlement workers who take these norms seriously feel professionally compromised when they are requested to engage in activities of religious socialization. This is a form of role conflict experienced by resettlement workers who must deal with the competing definitions of their job as advanced by the agencies which employ them, on one hand, and the profession of social work on the other. This type of role conflict has been noted as pervasive within the social work profession (Wilensky and Lebeaux 1965:319).

In this instance, the staff also objected to religious socialization of their clients because they noted that many Soviet Jews were not interested in religious activities. Many claimed to have chosen the

United States as their destination instead of Israel because of their desire to avoid living in a country where, like the Soviet Union, the government sought to indoctrinate its citizens with the superiority of a certain ideological position (Judaism or Communism). Noting émigrés' resistance to religious indoctrination, many resettlement workers downplayed the role of religion in resettlement. A Southern California social worker comments:

> And for our lay people, if our board people were really to hear that . . . [Soviet Jews came to U.S. for other than religious reasons] I don't think that they would be really thrilled to hear that. I think they really think they rescued them . . . they think about it in terms of the refusenik.
>
> But I tell you, as far as I'm concerned, it doesn't really bother me. They are people, they want to restore their lives, they want to live in the United States. You can't work in this business and sit in judgment of people.

Providing their clientele with psychological therapy was the second major strategy utilized by nearly all of the resettlement workers who worked with either Vietnamese or Soviet Jewish refugees and possessed the MSW degree or other training in counseling. Professional resettlement workers are motivated to provide refugees with therapy for at least three reasons. First, they feel that psychological therapy will aid refugees in successfully adjusting to life in the United States as well as help them to resolve the mental trauma brought on by their flight from home, loss of status, loved ones, etc. (Chu 1981; Goldberg 1981; Coughlin and Rosenberg 1983). Second, for many social workers, the provision of psychological therapy is regarded as the major activity and purpose of their profession. Just as surgeons feel professionally obliged to operate, social workers feel obligated to give therapy. Third, while social workers are often unable to provide client-defined needs, such as a good job, they can, at will, dispense therapy to clients. This allows them to experience a sense of professional satisfaction and feel that they are in control of their work.

While MSW resettlement staff see the provision of therapy as a worthwhile activity, their clients are often less-than-willing consumers of counseling (Wiseman 1970:312). This is because many of the cultural prerequisites of a successful therapy interaction are generally lacking. Both groups of refugees are generally unfamiliar with psychological therapy, are distrustful of bureaucrats and officials (the role many refugees see social workers as occupying), do not share in notions like Western individualism and the unconscious upon which many therapies are based, and do not see a connection between the

process of therapy and the problems which to them are most pressing (Wong 1981; Coughlin and Rosenberg 1983). A Vietnamese social worker describes his efforts to train fellow refugees to become consumers of therapy:

> From a mental health professional point of view, whether we can successfully work with these [Vietnamese] people depends on how well they are willing to work with us. The important thing is . . . since this method of problem solving is rather new to the population, we really have to work . . . to, you know, educate them to inform them what our role is.

A social worker with a Soviet Jewish clientele makes similar comments:

> We have to educate the Soviet Jews as to what the social worker is. To them, what the social worker does is not clear. They are concerned with matters of money and they don't know how to fit the social worker in. They aren't interested in the psychological point of view. And because of their experience, they don't trust anyone who works for some kind of agency. Also, in Russia only extreme psychotics receive treatment. They are not comfortable with counseling or therapy.

Social workers who are aware of their client's lack of interest in psychological therapy, yet still feel that refugees would greatly benefit by discussing problems in a neutral and supportive environment, engineer situations which permit issues of interest to refugees to be discussed in a manner which includes therapeutic content. These include classes and workshops on womens' issues (Coughlin and Rosenberg 1983), health, raising children in America, and adapting to a new economy. A social worker describes a class she organized which included both information and group therapy for Soviet Jews:

> We have just completed a coping-with-stress workshop. We called it something like "Finding your own job and coping with the anxiety in the interim." They are not used to talking about their feelings. I just read the evaluations . . . very concrete job search issues were most important [to them]. And the feeling piece was not their interest. But our counselors felt that a lot of stuff was happening in that there were other people in that boat and it was okay to talk about that. It was okay to be anxious.

Every agency I visited which employed MSWs offered these kinds of "problem solving and therapy" classes.

Interestingly, refugee resettlement literature for social workers offers a means of coping with the difficulties presented in providing refugees with therapy in the form of therapy for frustrated therapists:

"Because treatment is such a new experience for the client, the worker needs to tolerate a long period of ambivalence. The worker will need to accept the client's mixed feelings about being there, while continuing to educate him to the casework process" (Dorf and Katlin 1983:146). As the reassuring tone of this quote reveals, the social worker's commitment to providing therapy is so strong that if refugees are uninterested, they will provide therapy to each other.

The strategy of redefining the role of resettlement work to emphasize activities in addition to those of supplying client-defined needs are most often utilized by resettlement workers who maintain a high level of personal identification with their clients. While some resettlement workers seem to have a predisposition towards personalistic attachment to clients, others adopt these strategies largely because they are an effective means of reducing the frustration built into their jobs.

Developing Constituencies

As resettlement workers redefine their jobs to deemphasize client-requested services and instead concentrate on other activities, they often direct their allegiance and interests away from dependent refugees and towards other organizations and groups. In defining resettlement to include political organization and the securing of allies and funding, resettlement workers are able to obtain some relief from the daily frustrations of service provision and at the same time strengthen their organizational effectiveness with increased resources. This is a process of building constituencies.

Agencies work to develop ongoing relationships with bodies of less power than themselves (their clients), bodies of relatively equal power (other agencies), and bodies of much greater power (government agencies, religious congregations, corporations, and foundations). Such connections are a valuable resource for resettlement staffs.

A constituency of responsive, well-socialized clients is a useful resource for any resettlement agency. High-quality clients make it easier to "prove" organizational effectiveness, which in turn is a prerequisite for continued funding. Activities devoted to establishing a constituency of clients—referred to as "outreach"—are generally considered to be legitimate expenses in agency budgets. Evidence of an agency's strong ties with the refugee community is emphasized in the government's granting of refugee service contracts. Vietnamese-run agencies have marshaled the support of their clientele to prove the existence of community links, allowing them to compete successfully

for contracts with more experienced, American-run organizations. Agencies also organize their clients to participate in political demonstrations which benefit agencies. For example, one Vietnamese-run agency found that its ability to assume a leadership role in the Bay Area Vietnamese community was hindered by rumors that it was left-leaning. To counter these accusations, its staff called upon several hundred refugees as well as non-Vietnamese anti-communist groups and held a demonstration in San Francisco to protest the actions of communist Vietnam.

While resettlement agencies compete for funding and clientele, many find it useful to maintain contacts and communications with each other. Various "refugee forums" in the East Bay, at U.C. Berkeley, in San Francisco, and in Orange County allow for the development of inter-agency links. Agencies use their links to exchange information and client referral, alert each other to community developments and job openings for resettlement workers, and foster multi-agency responses for dealings with government and news media. In my fieldwork, I observed several instances where Vietnamese agencies went to great efforts to establish positive relationships with other agencies. In one case, the director of a Vietnamese-run resettlement agency made a dramatic public request at a San Francisco Board of Supervisors meeting to re-direct Targeted Assistance funds from his own agency to a Cambodian group. Positive relations, once established, are often referred to as evidence of an agency's good reputation.

Resettlement agencies also seek to develop positive relations with powerful public and private agencies in order to insure continued funding. For this purpose, a Vietnamese-run agency employed a skillful program developer who was in constant contact with sources of funding as well as news media. He made sure that the foundations which supported his agency got plenty of free publicity for their donations. Resettlement workers involved in constituency building are frequently politically oriented, ambitious individuals. They often place the continued funding of their agency above specific needs which they perceive within the local refugee community. As a result, they actively "follow the funding" available for refugee work and propose to provide whatever services funds are available for. Some constituency builders appear to see running resettlement activities as a means of gaining political support rather than the other way around. This is most common among Vietnamese activists who draw upon their past political experience and knowledge in order to accomplish goals in the United States.

Staff Strategies: A Summary

The job of providing services to refugees is often a difficult one for resettlement staff. Because refugees have had little knowledge of or experience with social workers and are generally suspicious of officials, interactions are often strained. Furthermore, because resettlement staff frequently are incapable of providing quick solutions to the problems clients define as most severe, they often face difficulty in maintaining an image of themselves as competent. Finally, because of declining funding and shrinking numbers of refugees currently entering the U.S., the future of many resettlement agencies is far from secure. Because of these many problems, resettlement staff adopt various strategies to make their jobs more secure, more fulfilling, or at least less frustrating. In my field work, I noted two common strategies: resettlement staff redefine resettlement work to include tasks which are more easily accomplished and personally rewarding, such as religious or ideological socialization or the provision of psychological therapy, and they build constituencies to strengthen the political position of an agency and increase its ability to obtain funding.

Which strategy is adopted is due in part to individual predisposition and in part to the structure of the resettlement position in which a worker is employed. Workers who were fairly secure in their positions and maintained a high level of commitment to clientele, like the MSWs working with Soviet Jews, often adopted strategies which involved redefining their tasks to include activities like cultural socialization or therapy which provided ideological or professional fulfillment. From the 13 staff involved with Soviet Jewish resettlement that I interviewed, 5 could be considered "therapy providers" and 3 "constituency builders."

Politically ambitious resettlement workers whose agencies were relatively independent of external ideological control were frequently involved in constituency-building. This activity is intended to strengthen their agency's political position and increase its access to funding. Constituency building was most often demonstrated by Vietnamese activists who used their positions in refugee resettlement to build a power base. Out of the 35 staff members of Vietnamese resettlement agencies that I interviewed, I found 13 such constituency builders and only 4 therapy providers.

Conclusions

The central point of this chapter involves the difficulties inherent in the provision and acceptance of refugee resettlement services.

Refugees are confused in their interactions with resettlement staff and frequently find themselves subjected to unfamiliar demands, prying questions, inaccurate stereotypes, and negative replies to their most pressing requests. Similarly, staff experience pressure from both managers and clients. While refugees seem uncooperative, unpunctual, and unable to accept advice, "higher-ups" often seem more concerned with politics than service and expect staff to indoctrinate clients and fill out masses of paper. Faced with the difficulties built into their interactions, both parties to the process (staff and clients alike) develop ways of working the system to maximize benefits and reduce psychic costs.

Vietnamese refugees generally remain uninterested in resettlement services. This is due to the financial limitations in many agencies which restrict service, the discomfort Vietnamese refugees feel in interactions with agency staff, and the suspicion many hold toward their fellows who receive pay to provide social aid. More than one refugee commented that resettlement agencies function more for the benefit of their staff than their clientele.

Soviet Jewish resettlement services are better organized, better funded, and more stable than those servicing the Vietnamese. They are frequently utilized by "problem" groups of the émigré community: the old, the young, the sick, and the unemployed. When frustrated in their interactions with staff, Soviet Jews sometimes attempt to utilize bribery or influence, Soviet techniques for dealing with officials. While religious socialization provided by the Jewish resettlement agencies is enjoyed by certain émigrés, some employees and clients alike are "turned off" by activities intended to create "a Jewish need."

For the vast majority of Soviet Jewish and Vietnamese refugees, then, resettlement services seem to have a fairly minimal effect. Agencies do provide many with their initial orientation in America, and in some cases offer valuable English classes. However, most of the refugees I interviewed ignore agencies or, at best, consider them to be "better than nothing" alternatives.

The fact that refugees hold this opinion is the fault of neither refugees nor their resettlement staff. Rather, it reflects the economic conditions and welfare policies which currently prevail in the United States. The services refugees desire most are the very ones demanded by other low income and minority groups in urban settings: affordable housing, good jobs, medical care, transportation, quality education, day care, and protection from crime. It is unreasonable to expect resettlement staff to be able to provide refugees with such services

when they are unavailable for sizable segments of the native population.

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7

Transformations in Perception of Self and Social Environment in Mexican Immigrants

Marcelo M. Suarez-Orozco

I go sad and heavy-hearted
to suffer and endure;
my Mother of Guadalupe,
grant my safe return.

[from the *corrido* "An Emigrant's Farewell" (West and Vasquez 1979:19)]

Introduction

Studies on the patterns of adaptation of an immigrant group resettling in a new land often ignore the "emic" perspective of the migrancy experience. Often lost between mechanistic models "pushing" and "pulling" subjects (cf. Williams 1979), we encounter human beings thinking and feeling, constantly making sense of their situations and their experience of the process of change.

The changing subjective experiences of immigrants, their affective and cognitive evaluations and interpretations of their new situations (and of themselves in these contexts) are of course a major consideration in both the social adaptation and psychological adjustment operating in immigration. The present study, conducted from early 1982 through 1984, explores a current pattern of immigration from rural Mexico to urban California from the level of understanding the self in culture as an experiential frame of reference (Marsella, De Vos, and Hsu 1985).

It is the purpose of this paper to present data illustrating some of the central interpersonal concerns that surfaced during research with Mexican immigrants into Northern California. The data are derived

from participant observation, a series of three-hour semi-structured interviews, and long conversations with over fifty Mexican immigrant families of children attending school in one of the Unified School Districts in the greater San Francisco Bay Area. Research with the immigrant families was part of a larger research project studying the social contexts of learning in bilingual classrooms. A co-researcher and I spent over two years in four bilingual classrooms (in a single school site) documenting aspects of the adaptation of over fifty children of rural Mexican origin.

Much to my delight, as the research progressed many of the parents spontaneously offered personal reflections on their experiences as immigrants. Many articulated their own feelings and ideas on being Mexican immigrants living in the United States. To a large extent my own thinking on these issues is a response to some of the rich thoughts, feelings, and ideas informants presented to me during the course of the research. In many ways, I found myself surprised by the themes which surfaced as relevant. My own expectations, as an immigrant from an urban Latin American center, were often contradicted as different people articulated and gave meaning to their experiences. For example, soon they made it clear to me that in order to make any sound statements on the patterns of migrant adaptation and adjustment, considerations relating to the historical background which prompted people to move must be taken into account.

As I searched the literature on Hispanic immigrant adaptation to the United States, I was perplexed by the general tendency (inherent in "mechanistic" or "superorganic" model making and theorizing), not to address the most basic differences between Hispanic American populations. It is useless to classify the immigrant from rural Mexico, the refugee from Central America, and the upper-class South American professional under the monolithic "Hispanic" rubric, or to expect them to respond in the same fashion. Yet most major statistical profiles of Hispanic Americans fail to take note of such basic distinctions within the Hispanic category (see Brown et al. 1980). At best they distinguish between "Central American" and "South American." When Ronald Reagan, upon return from a presidential tour of Latin America, concluded "You'd be surprised—they are all different countries" (quoted in Diskin 1983:xv) down there, he articulated a collective ignorance in this country regarding even the most basic distinctions among Hispanic Americans. In the context of recent historical developments, the influx of immigrants to the United States from Latin America continues to increase. The Central American case first comes to mind. We must begin to document the finer differences

between these groups of immigrants from the South if we are to understand the adaptive and coping strategies of these "new Americans."

This paper addresses aspects of one pattern rather characteristic of immigration from rural Mexico to urban California. The pattern outlined herein could in turn be compared to those described in other studies considering the principal themes in the migrancy experiences of more recent arrivals of Central American and South American origin.

"Here and There": A Mexican Immigrant's View of Two Social Environments

This paper uses as its framework the autobiographical reflections of a particularly insightful informant who articulated key aspects of a contemporary pattern of immigration from rural Mexico. We rely on Mr. Gonzales' experiences because he was particularly creative and spoke with some eloquence on themes that surfaced during research with other immigrant families from rural Mexico.

Jose Gonzales is a 34-year-old full-time landscape worker now residing in the greater San Francisco Bay Area. Mr. Gonzales, a muscular, handsome man has worked full time for the same landscaping company for the last 8 years, starting the very day he arrived in the United States in January of 1974. Mrs. Gonzales also works full time as a restaurant cook. Mr. Gonzales earned union wages, some $17.50 per hour of labor. He often worked overtime, especially on Saturdays and Sundays, in order to make extra money. Mrs. Gonzales worked in the same restaurant for the past year, though not always full time. The Gonzales family earned an annual total income of over $31,000 in 1981. Mr. Gonzales indicated that he anticipated a greater annual total income for the 1982 fiscal year.

Mr. and Mrs. Gonzales were born in Nayarit, Mexico, just outside of Tepic. Mr. Gonzales' mother and seven of his brothers still live there. An older brother has been in the United States since 1970. Like many other Mexican immigrants, Mr. Gonzales sends "enough money for my mother to live on" (cf. Zarrugh 1979). Furthermore, "from time to time" he also helps his brothers with money. It is known that such remittances have an important impact on the Mexican economy. Portes points out that remittances "strengthen the fiscal position of the [Mexican] state" (1978:477).

Remittances of course have a personal importance also. Mr. Gonzales repeated that his ultimate objective, his "dream" is to be able to "make enough money in the U.S. to go back and open a family business" back home. This conviction that the stay is a *temporary* phase on the road to better things back home color the attitudes of many migrants in a number of fundamental ways (see Piore 1979:52-65). By regularly sending money to aid his mother and other relatives, Mr. Gonzales is able to both make a difference in their standard of living and insure for himself a place of significant standing in his native town. He knows that a number of people who are indebted to him will reciprocate with help the day he goes back.

The Gonzaleses have seven children, three of whom were born in Mexico and four in the United States. Although Mr. Gonzales appeared to be content with his life in the United States, a sense of cultural loyalty to his native land was evident as he repeatedly pointed out that he expects to go back to live in Mexico "in 15 years or so." This idea of returning to Mexico, possibly to a better life, was common to many informants (see also Zarrugh 1979:158, Baca and Bryan 1981:309; Piore 1979:50-85), but in the seasons of a migrant's life, the idea undergoes several metamorphoses.

The issues relating to the idea of returning home are by no means simple. Although most informants agreed that they migrated in order to make a better living in this land of greater opportunity, and always planned on going back home with their hard-earned dollars, when and why migrants actually return depends on many variables. A few made enough money to carry them back to their dream. In other cases, as Kemper (1977) reports, considerations other than pure economics prompted Tzintzuntzeños in Mexico City to return home. My own tentative hunch is that, for the immigrants amongst whom I studied, a significant variable is changing parental attitudes regarding future opportunities for their children in the host land and at home. Many informants maintained with a degree of certainty that the English skills their children picked up in school would greatly improve the children's possibilities of getting "a good office job" in Mexico. Other studies seem to suggest that the decision to emigrate to Mexico may be rooted in job availability for the adults and perceptions of the well-being of children (e.g., Melville 1978:233).

The Gonzales' mode of entrance to the United States is similar to that of many Mexican immigrants (Zarrugh 1979). A network of *familia* (family members), *compadres* (co-parents, from the Christian practice of a man and a woman other than the child's parents sponsor-

ing a child at baptism), *amigos* (friends), *paisanos* (strictly speaking "from the same country," in this case meaning "from the same town" or area in Mexico), or simply *conocidos* (acquaintances and "friends of friends"), pave the way for others in a continuous flow of individuals and families. Mr. Gonzales pointed out:

> My brother was living here before I came to the United States, he sent me news telling me that he found me a job, the landscaping job. I arrived here on the 27th and that same day I started working. I came here alone, without my wife and children. I worked here alone, without my family for a year and four months, then I went to Mexico and brought them all here, and since then I never went back.

This migration pattern appears to be a common one (see Monge, Baca, and Dexter 1977 on the complex "industrial kinship network" in Los Angeles). However, "the *pater* leads the way" syndrome appears to be less exclusive today. Important changes characterize more recent forms of Hispanic immigration into the United States. Cohen (1981) reports a pattern of female-initiated immigration from Latin America. In such cases women, often from Venezuela and Colombia, enter the United States and commonly gain employment through service agencies. In time they are able to help bring their relatives, most often their children and siblings. More recently Carrillo reported a study which found that "in a bilingual child-care center located in the San Francisco Bay Area, 75 percent of the children live in homes in which the head of household is a single Hispanic woman" (1982:254). My own ongoing research among recent immigrants from troubled Central America confirms this observation.

In 1982 a network of over 70 paisanos lived in Mr. Gonzales' barrio in a San Francisco Bay Area industrial city. As he was helped by his older brother, Mr. Gonzales has in turn helped other paisanos obtain employment. He noted:

> Where I work, my brother got me the job, then after a while two other paisanos came in and I talked to my boss and got them jobs. They are working there now. Now there are five of us who know each other well.

Some researchers interpret this pattern as deeply rooted in the Mexican cultural prescription "to share some amenities [of U.S. life] with those persons to whom they are most obligated" (Baca and Bryan 1981:306). Dinerman (1978) has specifically shown how networks of relationships and mutual obligations condition the decision to migrate from Michoacan to the United States.

Once in the host country, reciprocal help goes far beyond the workplace. Zarrugh reports that amongst Jacalan immigrants to the San Francisco Bay Area:

> As many as 90 percent of newly arrived Jacalans stay at least initially with a relative or friend and, because subsequent housing is often secured through the aid of relatives and other fellow villagers, several Jacalan families usually reside within the same street or on several nearby streets. [1979:150]

Among my informants the mutual supervision of children is of critical importance. Because both Mr. and Mrs. Gonzales work, paisanos not only baby-sit but also emerge as a network supervising the daily activities of the children in the barrio (for a similar finding see Zarrugh 1979:151).

A chain of reciprocal assistance and cooperation, of physical, emotional, and economic nurturance that binds paisanos is pictured as the desired mode of entrance to the new land (cf. Zarrugh 1979:152). The Latin American folk postulate that "the way to make it is with the help of conocidos" permeates the migrants' world view. Mr. Gonzales offers his thoughts on this matter:

> Well, when one arrives here life is very difficult, because . . . well for me it was not so hard because, you know, when you arrive to a place and you have connections it is easier. If one has no connections, knows no one, without a job . . . then it is difficult. It is very difficult when one comes to this country and has no one to help him. It is hard.

Anticipations of affiliation and cooperation guide behavior more than some individualistic pattern of self-reliance as the migrants journey physically and mentally from the land of limited good (Foster 1979) into what they see as the world of opportunity.

In the mental geography of the migrant the two worlds of the "here" and "there" are indeed conceived of as binary opposites. For example, the immigrant's anticipation of economic opportunity and expectations of fairness in the actions of authority are given as a spur to migration.

Ideas about opportunities for education and work in the two countries often surfaced as migrants elaborated on the question "Is life here different from life in Mexico?" For example, Mr. Gonzales often said that he had completed only ten years of schooling in his native land before he had to drop out in order to go to work shortly after his father's death. This abandonment of school out of a necessity to work was a recurring theme in the lives of many of the men and women informants (cf. Rios 1981). With profound sadness and a sense

of bad fortune due to events outside of his control, Mr. Gonzales pointed out:

> I did not study, I wanted to study but I could not. Not that I lacked the drive or the will . . . but it was an economic problem. I wanted to study veterinary, to be a cattle doctor [*un doctor de ganado*] but I could not. I wanted to, I had good grades . . . all the time good grades. I was a very good student. Always since I was a child I liked that career . . . but no I could not study. I had to go to work. I went to work after school. It was hard. One's mind gets tired and then you lose interest. Also the poor diet and too much work. . . . After a while you lose the will to go on to school. Well what can you do. We are not all born for the books.

Although Mr. Gonzales felt that he had the capacity and certainly the will to achieve the career he so much desired, economic pressures prevented him from realizing his dream. Now he saw the educational opportunities available to his children born in the United States as potentially the opposite of his own:

> That is why I wish that my children study here. Here it is easier because they give them scholarships, they can go to school. Here it is easier for my children who were born here and are citizens. They can get help and go to school easier.

Having been deprived of the education he so much wanted, Mr. Gonzales now hopes that in the United States he may vicariously achieve his dream through his children.

Mr. Gonzales, like many immigrants, hopes that his children in this easier land of *ayuda* and *becas* (help and scholarships) will take advantage of the opportunities available to get the education denied to him. Many migrants who were "forced" into hard work early on in their lives hope that their children will avoid the hardships of physical labor by being educated in the United States. Those who plan to go back to Mexico strongly favored the idea that their children get a good education. Such informants reasoned that by learning English here their children could obtain a good office job in Mexico. An important meaning that the migration experience takes is to offer the children a better future. This idea that children were to be key benefactors in the migrant experience was voiced particularly by younger, more recent immigrants for whom this type of contrast between "here" and "there" was most fresh.

Mr. Gonzales had faced hard work from childhood on due to the early death of his father. His existence both in his native land and in the United States was the hard working life of a "peon-laborer," as he

called himself. He saw the routine of work in Mexico as having been cyclical and the opportunities for advancement as very limited indeed:

> The people there live off the land. There people have their little cows [*sus vaquitas*], and they live off planting. Planting is all that you can do to survive there. . . just plant and think of the rain. And that is life there. They pick up the harvest and live off of it the whole year. Then they do it again and again. That is life there. Here is different. Here if one comes as a laborer, one has more chances. Here you can make much money. Here you can get to know more places.

His interpretations of work in the two settings contrast sharply with one another. Work in his native land was essentially for survival but opportunities for advancement and recreation were viewed as nonexistent. Again constructing his experiences into opposites, Mr. Gonzales explained:

> Life in Mexico is very hard, especially now with the devaluation of the peso. A peon-laborer like me working there makes only 200 pesos in a day. In comparison here I make 130 dollars a day! There I could only make eight dollars a day. And without any benefits . . . absolutely no benefits at all. Here I have benefits for the doctors [medical insurance] and also I have vacations. In Mexico life is hard [*muy dura*], if one is a worker, it is hard, imagine in my case, I have a family of seven children . . . earning 200 or 250 pesos a day, that equals 20 or 25 dollars [in the early 1980s]. A pair of pants there costs 1,000 pesos . . . a week's salary! A kilo of onions costs something like 40 or 50 pesos. Here if you work, with the work of a single day you can buy . . . not the good quality stuff but you can dress yourself and buy food too; . . . in Mexico only if one has a large property or a business or something like that, because living off one's work is difficult.

The dramatic differences in earning potential and standard of living in the two countries and the network of conocidos facilitating entrance continue to be the most fundamental reasons influencing Mexican immigration to the United States. Many informants indicated this. Mr. Gonzales said that when his older brother sent him news of how much money he was making here, he "could not believe him." The cross-cultural mathematics remind Mr. Gonzales of his relative advantages.

The extent of sharp differences in earning potential across the border continues a historical pattern first noticed in the early 1920s, during the early emigration from North Central Mexico (Jalisco) to

the Southwest of the United States. West and Vasquez report that in the 1920s:

> Emigrants from Arandas [Jalisco] usually needed about one hundred pesos [then about fifty dollars—which is equal to many more pesos in 1979 currency] for their journey [to the U. S. Southwest]. If this sum seems inconsequential to present-day readers, they should consider that Mexican laborers working for the average agricultural wage during the 1920s would have been obliged to save the earnings of four hundred day's work in order to amass this amount. In contrast, the typical American laborer in the 1920s could have earned fifty dollars by working for only thirty-two days. [1979:19]

The underlying formula remains the same: the earning potential in rural Mexico in the 1920s was to earning potential in the U. S. in the 1920s as the earning potential in rural Mexico in the 1980s is to the earning potential in the U. S. in the 1980s.

Many informants identified government corruption and an institutionalized inequality as being responsible for the hardships experienced in Mexico. The theme of government corruption and unfairness came up spontaneously in many conversations with immigrants. Many maintained a vivid memory of their own political marginality and added that any form of government intervention made life more difficult. Mr. Gonzales contrasted his experiences in Mexico and the United States:

> The type of government there. . . . Life is hard there because the government there is not like in here. For example, if one gets stopped here by a policeman, you get a ticket for the infraction that you committed, then you can go and take care of it properly in a court. There, in Mexico, the policeman stops you and soon he wants a bribe. If there is *mordida*, [literally "bite," meaning bribe] then you can get away with anything. So a person with money gets away with all sorts of infractions. They know that nothing will happen to them.

This inequality and corruption are at the basis of a general distrust of authority.

The improper exercise of authority by those in power is, in the eyes of many, a further instigation for migration. Mr. Gonzales continued:

> That is what the police do, then the people in higher places, they do little for the good of all. Take the Governor for example. He does little to solve the problems of the city or the state. He does not provide jobs for the people. Then the people, without any

work there [*sin fuentes de trabajo*], they come up here.

With a perception of little opportunity in a troubled land, the migratory journey became a means for compensatory achievement in a new host society. Mr. Gonzales continued: "That is why many people come here. They work hard here for two or three years, they save money to go back and start a little business back in Mexico."

Such cross-cultural reflections help Mr. Gonzales make sense of the migrancy experience. Although he finds himself working very hard in a foreign land, operating in a language he barely comprehends, his view of Mexico is not replaced by any romantic nostalgia. Upon reflection the mathematics of poverty help remind Mr. Gonzales of the hard facts of life in his native land.

Most, if not all, informants said that they initially felt positive about their lot as Mexicans making a good living in a foreign land. Hard work—often in their own eyes too hard for *Gringos* (Anglo-Saxon Americans)—is endured as a means to a better life, hopefully back in Mexico (for a consideration of the immigrant as the ultimate *Homo economicus*, see Piore 1979:52-59). Many led ascetic lives dreaming of saving enough money to open a little business back home. Mr. Gonzales clearly fits this pattern. Comparative reflection helps him not only to interpret his own experiences, but also to endure occupational hardships and his present legal, political, and linguistic marginality.

Mr. Gonzales follows the mass media carefully in its references to Mexico. Such references in the media, the need to send remittances home, as well as interactions with fellow newly arrived paisanos, combine to provide a frame of reference through which he constructs the relative advantages of his current status. He is a hard-working Mexican "peon-laborer" making in a day of labor more than his brother in Mexico makes in a month. In time, he hopes to establish himself more advantageously back at home. With his hard-earned savings he hopes to make a good life for himself and his family. He feels lucky and is thankful for the present opportunities. His instrumental attitudes toward his present situation and future possibilities make Mr. Gonzales nicely fit the definition of a "true" immigrant (see Piore 1979:50-85; Ogbu 1978:24).

A Metamorphosis in Perception of Self and Social Environment

As long as the dream of return is maintained, and hard labor is well compensated in dollars and cents, hardship can be more easily

endured. However, for many immigrants, time eventually pushes the dream of returning into the realm of fantasy. Many older immigrants interviewed had psychologically burnt the ship that would carry them back home. Profound changes in self-perception, in their understanding of who they are, the nature of their encompassing social environment, what they can hope to become, and where their children can hope to go characterize a following phase in the life of many Mexican immigrants.

During our conversations it was apparent that some of the older informants had experienced a metamorphosis of their mental geography. They were naturally no longer living in the same world as the more recently arrived. For many of these informants the land of opportunity had become a terrain full of unnecessary obstacles, of overt and covert forms of discrimination. An informant who had been in the United States over twenty years summarized the situation by saying that Mexicans could not get ahead in this country "by the simple fact of being Mexican." The encompassing Anglo environment becomes hostile, increasingly cold, and at times crippling. In contemplating the future of their children many conveyed their profound doubts as to what their children could aspire to become. One man went so far as to tell us that the American involvement in Vietnam was "a plot to get rid of Mexicans."

Portes, Parker, and Cobas (1980) found an increasing perception of racial discrimination as a function of time among Hispanic immigrants. Cuban and Mexican immigrants were interviewed shortly after arrival and then again after a number of years of residence in the United States. With the passing of time people perceived increasing hostility and discrimination, even though their economic situations had improved.

When Cortez burned his ships he forced his men forward to conquest. Many Mexican immigrants who no longer consider return and thus *give up the dream that originally brought them here* must force themselves forward in what is often experienced as an alien atmosphere of coldness and rude rejection. Such a state of despair is what Piore referred to when he argued that for many migrants staying in the host country is a *failure* (1979:60-61).

Grebler has pointed out that the fact that Mexican immigrants have such a low rate of naturalization in the United States can be interpreted in terms of feelings of alienation. As an informant said to him, "Why should I become an American citizen?—people will still treat me as a Mexican" (1966:27).

What occurs to give this sense of alienation cannot be reduced simply to economic rewards. Some of the older immigrant informants were in fact doing quite well economically. They appeared to be much better off financially than some of the younger migrants still content with their new opportunities. Similarly, Portes et al. (1980) found that although Cuban and Mexican long-term immigrants were economically better off than when they first arrived to the United States, they felt more discriminated against after years of residence.

Many older informants appeared to think of themselves no longer as Mexicans making a good living in the United States, but identified themselves rather as members of a discriminated minority. For some, at this point selective aspects of Mexican-American history become increasingly significant. For example, a man who was illiterate lectured me on American violations of the treaty of Guadalupe as irrefutable evidence that Mexicans should never trust Anglos.

The primary frame of reference of many such informants was no longer Mexico, but rather the expected standards of the new land. "You can't get a good office job here if you are Mexican, they want you to work with your arms," said one informant. Another man, a rather prosperous self-employed tailor, pointed out that none of his six children went on to college because "teachers did not want to help Mexicans." Increasingly they became aware of the "job ceiling" that awaits their children.

This new point of reference, the expected standards displayed for them at work, in the mass media, etc., creates important changes in self-perception. Few, if any, of these openly discontented informants referred to present circumstances in Mexico. They seemed to have no emotional energy invested in events or conditions back home. Instead their narratives concentrated on their present political and often legal marginality within the "American system." The general mistrust of authority, which Mr. Gonzales and others related to experiences with corruption in Mexico, was transformed into vignettes about sad encounters with all too real forms of Anglo discrimination. A sensitivity to hostility, denigration, and discrimination by the encompassing Anglo environment emerges as a recurring experience of many informants. Some had periodic experiences of unemployment. An informant asked what he made of that simply said, "they always fire Mexicans first."

Significant changes relating to the issues facing the second generation also emerged. School problems of children were systematically attributed to unfair barriers in "the American educational system."

Teachers and administrators were identified as not caring about the education or future of "Mexican" children. A parent offered as evidence of the authorities' general lack of interest the fact that their barrio bilingual school was closed. He noted that now their children are bussed to a larger, more modern school in an affluent "Anglo" neighborhood. The informant said "they don't care that the children have to be thirty minutes in the bus." He further noted that "they" closed the modest nearby school so that a larger number of children, combined into one school, made the new school eligible for federal funds.

Zarrugh (1979:160-161) reports that second-generation Jacalan immigrants to the San Francisco Bay Area, who grew up in a highly cohesive immigrant community, have a "high frequency" of school dropouts. She associates this with evidence that members of the second generation "increase their identification" with the Chicano cause, a militant cause for fairness, pride, and equal opportunity that was totally foreign to their parents (1979:158).

When they are no longer able to rationalize their contemporary lot, which includes political and legal marginality, discrimination, etc., in terms of the "dream to go back home and live off the hard-earned dollars," the hardships endured by migrants like Mr. Gonzales seem to lose purpose, they become Kafkaesque absurdities. Few would be willing to endorse Mr. Gonzales' ethic. Consider his following statement:

> Sometimes I work eleven hours a day, often Saturdays and Sundays. Sometimes they bring in Americans to work, but they last a day or so. They don't come back. The work is too hard, we [Mexicans] can do this work but they can't.

The binary constructions of "limited opportunities" (home) vs. "unlimited opportunities" (U.S.), "American fairness" vs. "Mexican corruption," and others help the younger, more recent immigrants make sense of their experiences and can also be said to immunize them against marginality, discrimination, and caste-like barriers. In time many no longer can hold onto the dream of the return. This fact plus the all-too-real encounters with Anglo hostility make the binary constructions of the cerebral migrant crumble.

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8

Assimilation Patterns of Koreans in the United States

Eun-Young Kim

Introduction

As the second largest incoming immigrant group from Asia since 1970, Koreans have emerged as an important new element in the urban population of the United States. In this article, I attempt to assess the adaptation and adjustment of Korean immigrants in the U.S. through the application of Gordon's (1964) concepts of acculturation and assimilation.

The data for this study were gathered through field work with Koreans in New York and California using typical anthropological methods, including participant observation and interviews. Korean-American newspapers were a supplementary source of information on Korean attitudes and social life. In New York, I carried out formal intensive interviews using an open-ended structured questionnaire with 15 Korean families in 1981. I also draw on some 20 short informal interviews and participant observation in a two-month period of 1981. My first informants served as key informants whose acquaintances I then met and interviewed. Working through these networks caused some homogeneity in the sample, most of which consisted of professionals or technical workers from the middle or upper-middle classes. In California, I made no attempt to use formal structured interviews. From 1982 to 1984, my main research emphasis was given to participant observation and informal interviews in natural settings. About 150 informants were interviewed. They came from more diverse backgrounds than those interviewed in New York, ranging from lower to upper-middle class. They were reached through Korean churches and schools, Korean community service centers, and other networks.

While the two samples show some contrasts, I draw on both to discuss the Korean experience in the United States. Since the samples are based on different research techniques, and because the New York sample may not be representative of Koreans in New York, they are not amenable to a firm contrastive analysis. Although some informants said that Koreans in the New York area tend to be professionals from the middle or upper-middle classes and Koreans in California tend to be from the lower or lower-middle classes, I do not have adequate data to confirm this generalization.

General Background

Immigration of Koreans to the United States began in 1899, but they came as subjects of the Chinese Empire, and were therefore known as Chinese. Separate reporting of nation of birth by American immigration authorities began in 1901. An emigration office was established by the Korean government in 1902 after Deshler, the owner of a large plantation in Hawaii, visited Korea to recruit labor. The number of immigrants then increased rapidly. From 1902 to 1905, a total of 7,226 Koreans emigrated to Hawaii (Yun 1977:33). Emigration (except to Japan) ended with the Japanese colonial occupation of Korea in 1905 (ibid.). After Korea regained her independence in 1945, Koreans again appeared in the counts of the U.S. immigration authorities. The 1980 census estimated that there are 354,593 Koreans in the United States, but this is far from accurate. An unofficial report by the Korean Consulate General in San Francisco gave the number of Koreans in the U.S. as over a million in 1983 (speech at UC Berkeley 1983). A recent report from the Korean government puts the population of overseas Koreans in the United States and Canada at 840,094 as of 1984. Korean-Americans who have American citizenship are not included in that figure (Korea Times, Sep. 17, 1984).

Most Korean immigrants arrived after 1945. They show very different characteristics from the pre-1945 migrants. The majority of the latter were farmers and 65% of them were illiterate. Most of the recent immigrants are young urbanites, well educated or at least possessing labor skills (Hyung-Chan Kim 1970; Ilsoo Kim 1981). The early immigrants came as temporary residents who intended to return to their homeland when they had made enough money or when the political situation in Korea changed (Choy 1979:242). The recent immigrants have come to the United States to live permanently and make a home for their children (ibid.).

The motivation for immigration since 1945 can be identified both on the macro- and microlevel. On the macrolevel, economic, military, political, and social instabilities in Korea are the main push factors. Japanese and American economic intervention and the consequent dependency of the Korean economy, the threat of war with North Korea, and dictatorial government under consecutive military rulers have all encouraged Koreans to emigrate. The Korean government has also encouraged emigration as one solution to the burgeoning population. Many Koreans who suffered from the Korean war during 1950 to 1953, the April Student Demonstration in April 1960, and the military revolution in May 1961 have opted to go. Finally, some families, with adequate opportunities for their children at home, have emigrated in order to escape the military conscription which is obligatory to all Korean young men.

On the macrolevel, immigration to the United States has been encouraged by the enactment in 1965 of P.L. 89-236 which repealed the national quota system that had been primarily designed to restrict immigration from Southern and Eastern Europe, China and Japan, as well as other Asian countries. Quotas were instituted in 1924 on the grounds that these categories of immigrants did not assimilate successfully (see Morgan in this volume). When the quotas were eliminated, the number of Asian immigrants rapidly increased.

At the microlevel, individuals have their own reasons for preferring immigration to the U.S. Many Korean families come to better the educational and future job opportunities for their children. Education is seen as the main factor that enables upward social mobility and aspiration for higher education is general. No one in Korea is indifferent to education. Since the liberation of Korea from Japan in 1945, most of its leaders have been educated in America, and the deep involvement of the United States with Korean life has also led Koreans to regard America as the best place for the education of their children. Some people have come so that their children would not have to take the many exams they must pass in Korea to enter middle school, high school, and college. Koreans also wish to obtain better jobs and improve their standard of living. Manual workers believe that they can make more money in America than in Korea or other countries. Even those in the upper-middle class in Korea may think they can do better in the United States. They may prefer the American life style and be willing to give up their established status in Korea. Others have left after going bankrupt at home. By immigrating to the United States they escape the shame they suffered in Korea at having to start again empty-handed.

Another powerful motivation is to join family members already living in the United States. Many join sisters or brothers. Children arrive after their parents establish themselves. Some older Koreans reluctantly come to join their children. Korean wives of U.S. servicemen have frequently been followed by their relatives. One informant estimated that about one hundred of his relatives have come to the United States through one female relative who was married to an American.

The general trend of the U.S. immigration on the sending country, Korea, has been "brain drain." Korea has lost much of its human resources indispensable to development. Choy documents this in his book *Koreans in America* (1979). Among the 13,401 medical doctors licensed to practice in Korea since 1948, only 8,700 remained in Korea by 1973. Between 45 and 60 percent of the graduates of the eleven medical schools of Korea found employment abroad. There were about 3,000 Korean physicians in the U.S. in 1975 (Choy 1979:222). By 1984 probably far more Korean physicians were working in the United States than were serving the 15 million people in Korea's rural areas. Scientists and engineers are also part of the brain drain. But this is not the whole story. The Korean government used to encourage scientists and engineers trained in the U.S. to come back to Korea by offering them good salaries and other benefits. It changed its policy recently, realizing the advantage of having its nationals keep up with state-of-the-art knowledge in America. It can still make use of their expertise by hiring them as consultants whenever needed (personal conversation, Korean government official 1984).

Theoretical Framework

The basic framework for this paper derives from Gordon's (1964) distinction between "intrinsic" cultural traits (religion, ethics, folk music, language, literature and anything deriving from the central core of the ethnic cultural heritage) and "extrinsic" cultural traits (dress, manner, pronunciation of English, and any other traits deriving from adjustment to the environment). Gordon examined how these traits operate in various types of assimilation which he identified as cultural or acculturation, structural, marital (amalgamation), identification, absence of prejudice, absence of discrimination, and civic assimilation.

According to Gordon, the most important types of assimilation are cultural and structural. Cultural assimilation or acculturation is the end result of the process of "change of cultural patterns to those of the host society;" structural assimilation involves the "large-scale entrance into cliques, clubs, and institutions of host society, on [a] primary group level" (1964:71). He argued that while a considerable degree of acculturation has taken place in American ethnic groups, structural assimilation has not been extensive. Various case studies of ethnic minorities confirm this pattern (for Chinese, see Weiss 1974; for Japanese, see Kitano 1976; for Jews, see Rosenthal 1960).

Two previous studies of Koreans in America have used Gordon's framework. In research relating the assimilation process to participation in political activity among Koreans in Los Angeles, Cha (1977) discovered that acculturation had begun, but found little evidence of structural assimilation into or identification with American society. Hurh, Kim, and Kim (1978), who carried out a social survey of Koreans in Chicago, analyzed differential patterns of cultural and structural assimilation as related to demographic variables (age, sex, marital status, type of residence, occupation, religious affiliation, length of sojourn, etc.). To explain these patterns, Hurh and Kim (1984), after further research, came up with a theory of "adhesive sociocultural adaptation," which was defined as "a particular mode of adaptation in which certain aspects of the new culture and social relations with members of the host society are added on to the immigrants' traditional culture and social networks, without replacing or modifying any significant part of the old" (ibid.:188).

In this paper, I estimate the degree of cultural assimilation by examining the variables of dress, food, holidays, and language. Structural assimilation is assessed by looking at primary friendship networks, associations, and church memberships. For marital assimilation I looked at attitudes towards intermarriage in the second generation. Korean views on the desirability of changing citizenship and adopting American names provide clues for assessing identificational assimilation. I also examine Korean awareness of and response to discrimination. Because Koreans I interviewed had difficulty in differentiating Gordon's three categories of absence of prejudice, absence of discrimination, and civic assimilation, I asked them about their general sense of the degree to which they felt accepted or rejected by majority white Americans.

Assimilation Patterns of Koreans in the U.S.

Among first generation immigrants, cultural assimilation is taking place, but structural assimilation has rarely begun. Marital assimilation has occurred to a very minimal extent. The other types of assimilation have not occurred. How acceptable these latter types of assimilation may be in the long run can be partially assessed by how the immigrants view their children's futures.

Cultural Assimilation

Except for older women, most Korean immigrants do not wear traditional Korean dress because they say it is impractical as it is not machine-washable and interferes with rapid motion. Even in Korea today people wear such dress only on special occasions. Koreans in America have abandoned it entirely. Many informants did not even have Korean clothes. Those who do wear them mainly for Christmas parties, and sometimes for Thanksgiving or Easter parties which are usually held in Korean churches. Korean dress is not worn for the Korean New Year's day, full-moon day, or at ancestor-worship ceremonies.

While Korean dress has been abandoned, Korean food is still eaten at the principle meal of the day. In the majority of families, dinner is Korean, while breakfast and lunch consist of cereals and sandwiches. This is not because Koreans have come to prefer American food. They are first conforming to American preferences, thinking that the conspicuous smell of Korean spices, such as garlic, ginger, and red pepper will bother American co-workers. Second, they do not have time in the morning or at noon to prepare the spices which must be freshly chopped.

The main holidays of the year are now the American occasions of Christmas, Easter, and Thanksgiving, usually celebrated in church. Nonchurchgoers consider the holidays merely off-duty days. Korean holidays are largely abandoned. Some families do observe the full-moon day of August in the lunar calendar, but even for this they do nothing other than have dinner with friends. Most say they do not celebrate Korean holidays because these fall on work days when they are too busy to make special Korean holiday food, such as rice cake. Most importantly, the holidays are not considered fun now that they do not involve the gathering of kin. In Korea, holidays take their

meaning from the gathering of extended family members and other relatives to enjoy special food and games, thus strengthening familial solidarity. Immigrants to America, who have left most of their relatives in Korea, find no meaning in Korean holidays. On New Year's Day Koreans are supposed to wear traditional dress and hold the ancestor-worship ceremony in the morning, then visit all their relatives, especially the older generation, and perform a New Year's greeting in the form of bowing, *Sebai*. Most immigrants do not have a family to visit. In 1984 the ancestor-worship ceremony was practiced in only two families among my sample. Mrs. Shin said that her family began to perform the ceremony only after her parents-in-law immigrated and came to live in their neighborhood. Although she is busy and would prefer to ignore the occasion, her family performed the ritual because her parents-in-law thought they should. Others said they did not carry out the practice because they were not first sons, or because they were Christian. Many seemed to think that it would be strange to perform the ritual in a foreign country. Mrs. Ahn, who is a first daughter and has no brother, held the family ancestor-worship ceremony at her house while she lived in Korea. When she emigrated, her mother insisted on observing the occasion in the second daughter's house in Korea. Mrs. Kim said, "My husband is the first son, but how can we keep the ancestor-worship ceremony in America? We are too busy and I will ask my brother-in-law to keep it in Korea." She indicated that it is unreasonable to hold on to Korean ceremonies; they are now meaningless to her and it bothers her to have to prepare all the required ceremonial food while working as a full-time nurse. Thus most Koreans in America do not keep this ceremony and think it strange that anyone would. At the same time, they either rely on kin in Korea to keep the ceremony for them or pay the fee to Korean Buddhist temples in the United States to prepare for the ceremony and hold it there.

Of the cultural traits, language is least affected among the immigrant generation. All married couples (excluding those married to Americans), except one, speak to each other only in Korean. Mr. Lee and his wife use both Korean and English when together. To fellow adult Koreans all informants except for two couples speak only in Korean. They consider it more courteous. As parents speak Korean at home, children automatically learn Korean first. When they are of an age to go to kindergarten, both parents and children realize the children face a language problem and become embarrassed. Then, parents emphasize the importance of English to their children and the children try to speak English at every opportunity. As their fluency in English increases, they forget Korean. When parents think that chil-

dren have fluency in English, they then try to teach them Korean again, but they do not make a strong effort because they think English is more important to their children's future.

Structural Assimilation

While in many respects the Korean-American life style is similar to that of mainstream Americans, their primary social life remains ethnically oriented. Koreans who have independent businesses usually hire Koreans; many of those employed work for other Koreans. Those who work in ethnically mixed situations may make friends with non-Koreans, but most informants asked to name the three families with which they most closely associated named Korean families. Some said that the families closest to them were kin.

Only two women considered an American family to be one of the three families closest to them. In one case this was a neighboring family and in the other the family of a classmate. Only these two women had ever invited an American to their home, although all informants had been invited to an American home. Informants said they do not invite Americans because unfamiliarity with American etiquette makes them uncomfortable when they interact. Most Koreans claimed to feel nervous at American parties. They said they could not be real friends with Americans.

Ethnically oriented social life does not require Koreans to live in a geographical enclave. They prefer to live near fellow Koreans but this is not considered a critical factor in finding a residence. When a Korean neighborhood is formed, this is the result of a social network which facilitates the exchange of information about the housing situation.

It is interesting that Koreans who immigrate as adults think it impossible for themselves to have American friends, yet they want their children to get along well with non-Koreans and be fully assimilated to American society. They themselves make little attempt to assimilate not because they think it undesirable, but because they consider it impossible given that they are fixed in Korean ways. They take it for granted that at this stage all they can do is work hard and make sacrifices for their children. Those few Americans admitted to friendship were met through children, as piano teachers, baby sitters, or as parents of children's friends.

Social life is therefore carried out almost entirely with other Koreans. Families share dinners, go to picnics, and cooperate in rotating credit associations with other Koreans. Mr. Won belongs to a group with nine members, each of whom deposits $100 a month. One member receives the total $900 every month. He said his group was

formed not to save money, but to have a social gathering with fellow Koreans. Mr. Han is one of twelve members of "FAN" (Frontiers Association of New York). This is a clique rather than a formal association and was also said to be formed primarily for social purposes. The members contribute monthly to a common fund which they plan to develop to provide capital for a future business. They meet once a month, either in a member's house or at a restaurant, with all their family members and sometimes invite lecturers from various fields who can speak on American life.

Many groups of this nature were found in the Bay Area. One example is a parents' group in Fremont, which formed to teach their children about Korean culture and language. Every Saturday morning, Korean classes are provided. The monthly potluck dinner, originally set to review the progress of their children, turned into a social clique, which in turn created a rotating credit association.

Most Koreans are affiliated with such clique-type associations based on their professions, the schools they went to in Korea, or common home regions. On the other hand, most informants were negative towards formal associations such as the Korean Residence Association, which is found in many areas of the U.S. and is infamous among Koreans for internal factionalism.

The only formal associations with popular support are the Korean churches, which include Presbyterian, Methodist, and Baptist denominations. There were about 50 such Korean churches in the Bay Area in 1984. The church of Reverend Moon, on the other hand, has little Korean support.

The churches provide the central structural basis of the Korean community. They play the role of a pseudo-extended family for many Koreans. Some churches were formed by small groups of Korean immigrants, usually extended family members, who started with Christian meetings and later decided to invite a Korean pastor to lead them. Other churches were formed by pastors who initiated evangelical work and gathered congregations. Mrs. Choi, wife of a Baptist minister, explained that as her church is a kind of frontier church whose members are recently arrived Korean immigrants, she and her husband help them in every aspect of their life in America. They help them find apartments, have their electricity, gas, and phone service installed, buy furniture, and obtain social security. Mr. and Mrs. Choi also help arrange school registration for their members' children and meet with teachers about the children for the parents. Korean Christians say they do not go to American churches primarily because they do not understand the sermons. They also say they see no reason to

leave their ethnic church empty and attend other churches. One informant expressed this feeling in a phrase, "like oil and water."

Marital Assimilation

As most of my informants were already married, my questions about marital assimilation referred to their children. Only four informants had married Americans; two were now divorced. I heard about 3 more interracial marriages. All of these marriages occurred in Korea. The children of these marriages are not yet married and I conclude that the overall marital assimilation rate is still minimal.

In the course of exploring Korean immigrants' view of intermarriage, I found that most informants felt ambivalent about the relative superiority/inferiority of Koreans and Americans. The majority had a negative view of intermarriage. They tended to view their intermarried relatives as having sacrificed so that they could come to America and provide the means by which their kin could then immigrate. Those who married Americans, mostly women, lost status and were stigmatized. The stigma is in part due to the fact that many Korean prostitutes married American soldiers during the Korean War. It is also partly because Koreans think, in general, that Koreans and Korean culture are superior to Americans and American culture.

The Koreans presented the view that differences in backgrounds would cause trouble for intermarried couples, but they also revealed a more general feeling of inferiority in relation to the host society. One informant said that if a Korean marries a Caucasian, their children will look Caucasian, and therefore feel strange with the Korean parent, who will be seen as inferior. This will lead to isolation of the Korean parent from the rest of the family. Another informant agreed completely with this statement. They maintained this attitude even though most children of such marriages resemble both parents.

Informants also pointed to the different Korean and American definitions of male and female roles and said this would cause trouble. Dr. Park said, "For girls, it's all right, although not good. For boys, it's disaster." He meant that Korean women are brought up to obey men, and therefore will not bring trouble to an American husband, while American women who are brought up to assert themselves will bring trouble to Korean husbands.

Korean parents also feared that they would not be able to communicate with their sons- and daughters-in-law if their children married non-Koreans. They anticipate that the relationship between themselves and their children would eventually be broken.

However, while the majority had a negative view of intermarriage, all informants said that they could only try to prevent it and would have to give way if their children wanted to marry non-Koreans. In Korea, they said, there are many cases of children giving up marriages opposed by their parents, but here in America, children can more easily sever relations with their parents if they strongly wish to marry against parental wishes. Parents seem to choose to accept intermarriage rather than be cut off from their children. They are least hostile to marriage with Caucasians, but very anxious that affines be of high status. They are most hostile to marriage with Blacks or Puerto Ricans. I could not find any preference toward other Asians.

Some parents devise ways for their children to meet Korean mates. They arrange parties with Korean families. Those with children of marriageable age sometimes make a trip to Korea, by themselves or with their children, for the dual purpose of visiting friends and at the same time trying to find a proper bride or groom for their son or daughter.

Identificational Assimilation

Koreans distinguish themselves from other American groups as considerate, straightforward, honest, warm, and diligent. Their views of white majority Americans are rather negative. The most common opinions are that Americans cannot be trusted and they have no moral standards or ethics. While they smile and appear to be outwardly kind, Americans never seem to show their true feelings to others. Koreans think highly of hard work and honorable achievement, but perceive Americans to think that enjoying life is the best way to live. Although Koreans do admit that Americans are concerned with efficiency and can be patient, they also have the impression that Americans are too individualistic and cold to others.

The majority of my informants were permanent residents in the United States and some were American citizens, yet most identified themselves as Koreans. A few identified themselves as Korean-Americans. Most said that change of citizenship or permanent residentship was a matter of convenience and meant only a change on paper. Some who were citizens said they saw no benefit in American citizenship. Others said that citizenship was convenient and necessary for helping relatives to immigrate. The stable status, protection by the American government, job opportunities, and chances of obtaining scholarships were identified as other benefits of citizenship. One college student said that the granting of citizenship was a sign of the host

society's trust in the immigrant. He had a permanent residentship, but was rejected by the ROTC because he was not a citizen. This meant, he said, that while he could join a branch of the U.S. military as a soldier, he could not be an officer without American citizenship.

Attitudes on national identity were shown in the general unwillingness to adopt American names. Only a few had done so. The others said it was unnecessary to change their first name and regarded it as crazy to change their last name. Most Koreans introduce themselves to non-Koreans by their last name because their first names are difficult to pronounce for non-Koreans. On business cards, they usually print the initials of their first names and their full last name. Mrs. Min, who has both American and Korean first names, uses different names in different situations. She took her American name when she applied for a social security number. In a formal situation, she gives her last name only. In a friendly situation, she gives her full Korean name. In an unpleasant situation when she wants to remain distant she gives her American name. Her American college friends who were not close to her remember her by her American name. Those who were close remember her by her Korean name.

The ambivalent attitude of Korean parents toward assimilation of themselves and their children also appears in their attitude toward naming. While they themselves do not take American names, all except one gave American names to their children in addition to Korean names. They want their children to identify themselves as Americans, and they think that Korean names obstruct their acceptance as such because they are difficult to pronounce, thus difficult to remember. They therefore gave their children American names so they can more easily win non-Korean friends.

I discovered that Koreans emphasize their identity as Koreans and resent being mistaken for Chinese or Japanese, especially the latter. They think, and I agree, that this is because of the negative feeling Japanese evoke after colonizing Korea for thirty-six years. After some time in America, most Koreans become less resentful of this confusion of ethnic identity, especially when they begin to think that being identified as "Chinese" only means that they are identified as an Oriental, not as a Chinese. Some informants felt positive about the recent promotion of a pan-Asiatic identity.

Discrimination

As a minority group, Koreans feel they have experienced discrimination from members of the host society. They say that at a

superficial level discrimination and prejudice may not seem evident, but that once anyone looks beyond the surface severe discrimination and prejudice exist. From being ignored by a sales clerk in a store to not being promoted, ill feelings and treatment are shown in various forms and degrees.

Henry, the son of Mr. Kang, was rejected from a medical program when he was a junior in an American college and had to change his major to accounting. The reason for the rejection, according to Mr. Kang and Henry, was racial discrimination by Jewish administrators, because Henry had a better record than some other students who were admitted. After this happened, Mr. Kang found that his son did not want to study hard any longer and lost interest in everyday life. He decided to send Henry to Korea to go through medical school; with a license from Korea he could return to the United States to practice medicine.

In general, Koreans show two reactions to the discrimination and prejudice they perceive: they try to excel or they deny that discrimination exists. Like Mrs. Chung, some tell their children that they have to work harder than other Americans to overcome their handicaps as Koreans. They become involved with their children's progress in school. Mrs. Won used to attend the classes of her children at least once a week to see what they were learning and to encourage her sons. She worked as a volunteer mother and contributed food as often as she could. She also taught piano and violin to her sons as another way of overcoming their handicap. Most Korean mothers teach their children music and are very conscious of their children's education. My findings on the general enthusiasm for education is supported by an informal report, cited in a Korean-American newspaper, that 70% of Korean children are taking a variety of extracurricular lessons (Korea Times Oct. 4, 1984).

Some Koreans do not want to accept the reality of prejudice. They want to interpret discrimination as caused by individual differences in ability. They think that if one is competent, he will not be discriminated against. They are a small minority. Only one informant in New York and less than 5% in California held this view.

Conclusion

From the data above, one can see that the Korean case conforms to Gordon's (1964:77) hypotheses that for immigrant groups 1) "cul-

tural assimilation, or acculturation, is likely to be the first type of assimilation to occur" and 2) "cultural assimilation . . . may take place even when none of the other types of assimilation occurs simultaneously." Cultural assimilation, or acculturation, has preceded structural assimilation. Even acculturation has not occurred comprehensively: Koreans continue to value and use Korean food and language. Structural, marital, identificational, and other types of assimilation have not occurred yet. However, it is unlikely that Koreans will continue to be an unassimilated minority. For the second generation, not covered in this paper, there is a strong possibility of structural assimilation.

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9

Rusticating Chinese Educated Youth: Adaptation Processes

Weiyang Chao

Introduction

After founding the People's Republic of China in 1949, Chairman Mao Zedong initiated a number of national campaigns aimed at achieving socialist values. Drawing on his extensive familiarity with the Chinese peasant, Mao was convinced that urban educated youth could learn much from poor and lower-middle rural peasants. One of his programs involved encouraging urban middle-school graduates to relocate in Chinese rural villages. From the mid-1950s through the late 1960s approximately 1.2 million urban middle-school graduates were settled in rural villages.

The categories of people used in this paper must be clarified before describing the rustication campaign. "Educated youth" (*zhishi qingnian*) refers to youth having received at least junior middle-school education. "Poor and lower-middle peasants" (*pin-xiazhongnong*) is a class category and label defined by the Chinese Communist Party which refers to those who, before land reform, were barely able to support themselves with their own land and had no need to rent from others (lower-middle peasants) or those who possessed little or no land or depended on land rented from others (poor peasants).

In early 1966 the Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution was initiated by Chairman Mao. Within this new framework the relocation program for educated youth was intensified in late 1968 as the Cultural Revolution was coming to a climax. Twelve million Chinese educated youth experienced a gigantic urban to rural migration from 1968 to 1975. The program was known as *Shangshan Xiaxiang*: "up to the mountains and down to the countryside." Chairman Mao Zedong (1976:11) initiated the program on December 22, 1968 by publishing a directive in China's national daily newspaper, *Renmin Ribao*:

> It is highly necessary for young people with education to go to the countryside to be reeducated by the poor and lower-middle peasants. Cadres and other people in the cities should be persuaded to send their sons and daughters who have finished junior or senior middle school, college or university to the countryside. Let us mobilize. Comrades in the countryside should welcome them.

The relocation of educated youth to rural areas was only one of many social programs of the period. It was closely related to other concurrent political campaigns and ideologically confirmed many articulated Cultural Revolution goals. Political leaders believed strongly that formal education had become dominated by bourgeois intellectuals. Under this domination, some leaders felt students were attaining only book knowledge, becoming physically lazy, and remaining ignorant and incapable in practical knowledge. In the words of the day they "can neither use their own limbs nor tell the five grains apart" (*siti bu qin, wugu bu fen*). Even worse, leaders were concerned that students were seeking selfish prestige and comfortable futures. In their view, continuing this process for only one or two generations would turn China into a Soviet-like revisionist state. Reforming education was essential.

The goal was to make Chinese society more egalitarian by bridging the three major gaps—between town and country, worker and peasant, and manual and mental labor that still exist in a socialist state. For Mao Zedong and some other Cultural Revolution leaders this reform could best be achieved on the education front by transferring classrooms from schools to the vast Chinese countryside. There, educated youth would receive "reeducation" from the poor and lower-middle peasants. In the process of "reeducation," they would learn physical labor, understand how grain is produced through hard labor, be taught to lead a diligent and plain life, and overcome an unhealthy bourgeois morality. They would experience rural social life and thereby more fully understand class stratification, exploitation, and oppression.

In addition to this ideological rationalization, there were economic reasons behind the program. Before the Cultural Revolution there were often not enough jobs for middle-school graduates. During the turbulent years of the Cultural Revolution employment opportunities were further reduced as factories, mines, and other urban enterprises could not maintain normal production and business. Since the universities were closed down no advanced students were enrolled during the late 1960s. Faced with the difficulty of providing

jobs for millions of urban middle-school graduates and students at this time, the leaders must have seen urban unemployment as another important reason for intensifying the rustication campaign.

The educated youths' response to the rustication campaign was mixed. Some ideologically motivated youths were enthusiastic. Others resented being uprooted from their urban environment and some felt negative pressure from their parents.

The youths' experience in the rustication program varied from place to place. Some relocatees were sent to open and develop new frontiers. Elsewhere, existing rural villages also received relocating youths. Four generic transfer types were finally incorporated into official policy between 1968 and 1975. The first two involved group assignment to a village or farm, while the second two sent individuals to specific villages, based on existing personal social ties.

1. *Dao Guoying Nongchang*: "Going to the state farms." Two choices were available under this transfer type. One involved going to existing state farms within the various provinces. The other entailed development of new settlements in previously undeveloped frontier areas. Guoying Nongchang educated youth were regarded as state workers. This meant that they were still eligible to receive state salary, grain rations, free medical expenses, and other welfare subsidies. They enjoyed home leave once a year with transportation expenses. Generally speaking Guoying Nongchang educated youth had fewer difficulties than those settling in the rural villages.

2. *Jiti Chadui*: "Group insertion into production teams." Under this transfer type, the State sponsored area assignment. Jiti Chadui were organized into groups before relocation. Each group was then assigned to a specific area located somewhere in China. Typically, provincial governments placed their Jiti Chadui educated youth within the province. Beijing and Shanghai municipal governments which were under the direct administration of the national government were exceptions to this policy, as most of their Jiti Chadui educated youth were assigned to other provinces.

3. *Huixiang Chadui*: "Insertion into native village production team." For those opting for this transfer type, permission and sponsorship had to be obtained from the village before the relocatees could be assigned. Once relocated in the village, Huixiang Chadui educated youth were to be treated the same as other resident peasants.

4. *Touqin Kaoyou*: "Going to a relative's village." Again, people choosing this transfer type were required to secure permission and sponsorship from the village prior to settlement. In some cases Huixiang Chadui and Touqin Kaoyou educated youths found themselves

more easily adapted to the local life for they had local kinship networks and understood local languages. However, this was not always the case, for if the support of kinsmen was lost these educated youth could fall more easily into social isolation or difficult situations than those in group relocations.

This article is based mainly on my personal experience during three years as a Beijing rusticated youth settled in China's Yenan area in northwest Shaanxi Province. Thirty thousand Jiti Chadui educated youth were distributed in different villages over this area. I also draw on my knowledge of what happened elsewhere to widen my discussion. The discussion presented here concentrates more specifically on the adaptation process: 1) initial accommodation obstacles, 2) external forces aiding the adaptation process, and 3) major coping strategies. The term adaptation, as used in this article, refers to a process by which relocatees adjusted their behavior to suit new and changed social environments.

Initial Accommodation Obstacles

When they arrived in the countryside, rusticated youth confronted a number of changes: in status, from students to peasants; in environment, from city to village; and in their way of life, from consumer to producer. While such dramatic changes caused young urbanites many problems, there were two major obstacles: 1) their inability to carry out the rural physical labor, and 2) difficulty adjusting to rural material life.

Physical Labor Barrier (Laodong Guan)

For many educated youth, the first reeducation lesson involved accommodating themselves to the physical demands of rural labor. Most had grown up in more comfortable urban settings and had little experience with the strenuous nature of rural physical labor. Their first attempts to endure the rigors of agricultural production in the Yenan area were extremely painful.

Yenan is located on China's Northwest Loess Plateau. Animals cannot be used in many areas because of the steep topography, so human labor is substituted. People use picks to harrow entire hills and carry manure with shoulder poles or in baskets on their backs from valley floors to hilltops five or six times a day. Each trip from valley floor to hilltop is seven to eight li (approximately 2.4 miles). During the two harvest seasons human labor is again required to bring

the crops back to the village.

Required to perform such manual tasks like all local peasants, many educated youth from Beijing got blisters on their hands and feet soon after their arrival in Yenan. Often these blisters became infected due to lack of proper medical care. After working 12 to 13 hour days on the hills, their backs and legs ached. They were often too tired to collect firewood and cook for themselves.

I kept a diary of my experiences, which were typical of many student experiences. One vivid description deals with the hardships of rural physical labor, especially during the period just after arrival in Yenan. After four trips carrying 40 to 50 kg. loads of crops from the hilltop to the village, on my last trip of the day I wrote:

> The crop roll on my back came loose several times, but I did not know how to tie it more firmly. Gradually I fell behind the rest of the group as I was slowly drained of all my strength. No one came to my aid. Continuing, I slipped on the ground several times. When passing an overhanging cliff, the crop roll on my back was caught by the bushes. Staggering out of control, I nearly slipped and fell over the cliff which was 15 to 20 meters high. At this moment I was neither frightened nor panicked. My psychological reaction was not due to courage but to my complete physical and mental exhaustion.

The educated youth found that rural physical labor must be accepted. Work was often strenuous, monotonous, and dull. Throughout the day, week, or even month, one had to repeat again and again the same movements. Understandably some educated youth found that they became the equivalent of today's urban office clock watcher: "Feeling bored and tired, we were just looking at the sun, hoping it would move faster and go down the hill earlier."

Reflecting internal dissatisfaction, some rusticated youth began referring to the rural work tasks as *xiuli diqiu* (mending the earth) or *yu tukele da jaodao* (dealing with dirt). These expressions portrayed a sense of self depreciation. Often, such statements reflected feelings of weariness and dislike that gradually emerged out of the inability and the lack of interest in rural physical labor.

Material Life Barrier (Shenghuo Guan)

As mentioned above, the rustication campaign was officially intended to bridge gaps between town and country, worker and peasant, and manual and mental laborer. These gaps are wide in contemporary China. Rural/urban differences are so wide that bridging

these gaps is not easy.

The difference between rural and urban material living standards is one of the most obvious. The State guaranteed grain supplies for people living in cities. Though still rationed, these supplies consisted of larger proportions of wheat flour and rice than was common for Northern China's rural peasants. Rural peasants were required to produce their own food in addition to providing the grain supplies for urban areas. Under the terms of urban employment, the State usually furnished housing. While not extravagant, such urban housing was equipped with modern conveniences including electricity, running water, flush toilets, or even gas. Rural peasants rarely lived with such conveniences.

Most educated youth arrived in Yenan from Beijing in early spring. Since winter had just ended, some peasant families were experiencing grain shortages and the new year's crop of fresh vegetables was not yet available. Ignorant of these conditions upon their arrival, some young urbanites used precious white bread brought from Beijing to feed local peasant dogs. Understandably, local residents resented such extravagant behavior.

Adaptation to local living conditions began almost immediately. Wheat flour and rice, the staples in Beijing, were not available. Local foods were made from corn, millet, and sorghum. While such foods are nutritious, many found the foods coarse and unpleasant. Leading the life of the local people was not going to be as easy as many had thought before their arrival.

Limitations in transportation and communication made it difficult for them to maintain contacts with family and friends, and they found problems in relationships with local people. There were other difficulties. The State allocated a 240 yuan "settlement fee" per educated youth. However, these funds were not controlled by the relocatees. Production teams, brigades, and even communes, which constituted the rural Chinese grassroots administrative levels, controlled State funds. A major proportion of the settlement fee was to be used for house building, but in many villages the fee was not used properly and promptly to build new housing. Relocatees had to live in any available extra space or unused peasant houses.

In Yenan earthen caves dug out of the loessial hills are preferred housing. Loess caves are generally considered warmer in winter and cooler in the summer. Nevertheless they can be damp if not heated constantly. Caves made available to rusticated youth varied in quality; some were good, some poor, some were even unsafe. Because heating caves is so crucial, difficulties in collecting firewood were

acutely felt. Not only was there very little time available after completing the day's agricultural production tasks, but available firewood was found only in dangerous cliff locations. Since they were unable to collect adequate amounts of firewood, many suffered from the dampness. Some contracted arthritis as a result.

Rural sanitation conditions also made many uneasy. One Beijing youth wrote to his parents: "Here I have to fight with fleas in my caves and lice in my clothes all the time. I have to eat breakfast in the field after using my hands to scatter night-soil fertilizer (*na fen*)."

By far the most serious challenge facing young urbanites involved the combination of hard work and material lifestyle. Inexperienced and unskilled, their successful adaptation to rural life was made more difficult because most could not rely on either the State or their parents. Rural peasant cooperatives were structured to reward each worker in proportion to his/her contribution to the overall production. Rusticated youth faced two difficulties under this system. Because they were inexperienced in rural agricultural production they often earned 20-30% less than the local able-bodied peasants. For example, if a peasant earned 10 work points in a day, an educated youth might only get 7-8 points. Moreover, most educated youth had poorer work attendance due to their physical inability to work without breaks or because they intentionally stayed away from work. Consequently they got a smaller grain ration from the team. For youths located in wealthy villages this was not necessarily a problem. For those living in villages without enough grain, less grain distribution meant a serious threat of hunger.

Psychological depression was causally interrelated with physiological stress (cf. Scudder and Colson 1982:269). Faced with unexpected problems and the realities of rural life, some youths began to feel doubtful and discouraged, then wavered in their long-term commitment to rural life. Some experienced a drop in morale. Some became homesick, thinking of their parents, after the first separation in their lives. Others cast doubts on the officially articulated meaning of reeducation, which can be summarized as follows: "Are the poor and lower-middle peasants our real teachers? Is the countryside our classroom and physical labor our lessons? What about book knowledge education? Should we discontinue book learning, gradually forgetting?" However, the key question lay in the principle of *Zhagen* ("strike root"), settling permanently in the countryside: "Are we doing what is worthy of our talents? How long can we stay on? What future can there be if we stay permanently?"

External Forces Aiding the Adaptation Process

External forces were operating throughout the rustication campaign to aid adaptation to the rural situations. Three forces can be identified: political education, administrative remedial measures, and local factors. Depending on specific geographic location, these forces were more or less effective.

Political Education

Political education was an ongoing local process throughout the entire rustication campaign. Two purposes were served. First, political education was seen as an essential aim of the rustication program, and second, it was viewed as effective for keeping youths' minds on rural work. Education was organized by the local communes, brigades, or teams and took the form of regular study meetings, recreational activities, blackboard newspapers, and on-the-spot education.

Chairman Mao's ideology was a dominant theme in most political study meetings. Much of what was studied emphasized his "criterion" for distinguishing a revolutionary intellectual from a non- or counterrevolutionary intellectual: "Whether or not he is willing to integrate himself with the broad masses of workers and peasants and does so in practice" (Mao 1965:246). This idea was convincing to many. Because Chinese peasants constitute the great majority of the population, such youth believed that: "If we, the young intellectuals with mostly book knowledge, look down on the peasants and refuse to share their happiness and sorrows we will sooner or later be divorced from them, betray them, and, finally, be opposed to them. If we stand against the interests of the broad masses of people, we will not be revolutionaries."

Mao Zedong's instructions were used to help educated youth cope with the frustration and disillusionment of rural settlement. Some of Mao's quotations were often written on the blackboard or even set to music, such as: "fear neither hardship or death" or "be resolute, fear no sacrifice, surmount all difficulties, and win the victory." During arduous tasks Mao's instructions were often sung as work chants. For example, the chants were sung when Yenan's many dams were built to catch the fertile earth contained in flood waters. These dams required massive human effort to work layer after layer of dirt into shape and, according to some, the work chants were effective in fighting fatigue.

As the Chinese Revolutionary Base Area during war times, Yenan is now officially regarded as the "cradle of the Chinese Revolution." As part of their education in revolutionary tradition, Beijing youth settled in Yenan often visited places with historical significance, such as the caves where Mao Zedong lived for more than ten years. Here, they were told the story of Mao's previous life—how he lived and worked in earthen caves furnished only with earthen beds (*kang*), simple wooden furniture, and kerosene lamps, and how he experienced all sorts of hardships while leading the Chinese revolution to a national success. These activities were aimed at enabling them to understand an ultimate truth: revolution is full of hardship and success requires painstaking and arduous effort.

Mao's beliefs, images, words, and life history exerted their greatest influence on educated youth when he enjoyed unprecedented prestige in China. Even while having difficulties with the concrete problems confronted in rural life, many remained steadfast in their support of Mao's direction to integrate themselves with the broad masses of peasants.

Administrative Remedial Measures

Of course, the problems associated with the rustication program were not felt only by the youth attempting to cope with rural life. Rural grassroots bureaucracies also had difficulties accommodating the large numbers of urban youths transferred to rural villages. Mao Zedong had instructed that "comrades in the countryside should welcome them." In accordance with this instruction, rural cadres were expected to provide the essentials of material life, physical labor training, and political studies.

Rural socioeconomic conditions did not provide the time, efforts, and material resources necessary to meet such responsibilities. In villages with inadequate land, added local population simply meant additional mouths to feed. The realities of providing material necessities to hundreds of households in a collective often left little time for reeducation. As a result, educated youths sometimes lived with little formal supervision. Without essential guidance in the ways of rural life, they were often unable to provide all of their material necessities. Such situations continued for several years in some cases.

In 1973 Li Qinglin, a well-known rural teacher, wrote to Mao Zedong requesting assistance in alleviating the difficulties being experienced by his son in Fujian Province. Mao publically acknowledged widespread problems in his written reply when he

promised to try to solve the problems. Mao even sent him several hundred yuan (*Renminbi*) (*Peking Review* January 9, 1976). Mao's promise was soon backed by powerful economic and administrative remedial efforts.

Several administrative measures were implemented. Peasant reeducation of urban youths was reemphasized with efforts made to give them jobs whereby they could contribute to rural life. Following this principle many educated youth were selected as "barefoot doctors," village school teachers, farm technicians, brigade accountants, and instructors in political studies. These jobs provided extensive opportunities for some educated youth to use their abilities and knowledge. To an important extent these activities improved the peasants' perceptions of the relocatees and reduced their feelings of being burdened.

To bolster morale, conferences honoring advanced youths were held at regular schedules. Conference representatives were chosen based on rural performance, beginning at the commune level and proceeding to the national level.

In the same period, severe penalties were imposed on criminals taking advantage of relocatees, raping female urbanites, or embezzling settlement fees. Local authorities who cracked down on such offenders helped to reduce serious threats to the rustication program.

The official policy of "equal pay for equal work" was made more specific and rural villages were required to implement it. This policy was mainly directed against local discriminatory treatment in evaluating work and allocating work points. In some locations youths were still being paid at the same level as when they first arrived. After two or three years of painstaking learning they were now clearly more qualified in many rural work skills. Discriminatory pay levels were often two or three work points per day less than the local full manpower pay level (*quan laoli*). Local discrimination resulted from a number of complex sentiments, including the youth's squeemishness, local prejudice against outsiders, and resentment of having to share limited resources. To various extents, such actions dampened the earnest efforts some youths made in their desire to adapt to local life and aggravated the antipathy of those resisting adaptation to rural realities.

Local Factors Affecting Adaptation

The local factors that affected the youths are less easily defined than "political education" and "administrative remedial measures."

These were specifically documented in official relocation policies. Local social, cultural, and environmental influences were not, but in many cases, such local influences were powerful, coercive, and persuasive in shaping the urbanites.

Relocatees had to accept the basic economic reality—"You are on your own." State settlement fee subsidies lasted no longer than one year. The "equal pay for equal work" policy penalized those who were lazy or unable to work hard. The less they worked the less they would get. As peasants, the educated youths had to participate in collective labor, and in addition work their own private plots, collect their firewood, and husk their own grain. As mentioned previously, the self-reliant rural economic structure presented them with a serious challenge. Specifically, this structure was a powerful and coercive apparatus impelling educated youths to live on their own and adapt themselves to rural life. Apart from economic effects, local influence was also strong and important for social integration. Very often educated youths were touched and spurred by the local peasants' willingness to bear hardships in life and work. "If they can, we should and can too." Some youths were strongly motivated by knowing how the peasants live year after year and generation after generation.

Regardless of relational problems, many peasants got along well with the educated youths. Some treated them cordially and carefully in response to official policy. Some, out of sympathy, offered assistance. Although less common, some young rural men and women pursued more intimate personal relationships with the urban youth. However different these approaches were, the assistance offered, warm concern, and decent treatment shown always speeded adaptation.

Major Coping Strategies

Educated youths displayed great variability when adapting to rural life. Despite this variability and diversity, several active and passive coping strategies and responses can be identified: 1) being adept in learning, 2) being self-sustaining rather than dependent on outside aid, 3) "being in their need," 4) "when in Rome doing as the Romans do," and 5) intermarriage with the locals.

Being Adept in Learning

Adapting requires learning. Once in the countryside, educated youths who learned to do rural physical labor more quickly and easily

adapted more successfully. Those in their late teens were especially adept in this physical adaptation. Within one year of arrival in the village many had the necessary body strength to adequately perform most rural work.

The value of ability in learning is clearly seen in a specific example. In Yenan peasants considered ox-drawn plowing and sowing a highly skilled job; plowing must be done at the appropriate depth and speed, while sowing requires even broadcasting. Controlling oxen requires great experience, and educated youths were kept from these jobs during their early labor participation. I recorded the success of one educated Beijing youth, Huang (a pseudonym), in my diary:

> Huang was dissatisfied with his inferior labor status. During break hours, when oxen were not being used, he tried driving a team. Simply because of his unfamiliarity with commands used by the local peasants he lost control of the animals. Completely ignoring observers' sneers he continued practicing. Later, he wrote down every command in Pinyin [the Chinese phonetic alphabet].

After fully learning the commands in this manner he continued practicing with the oxen until he was able to obtain the correct responses. He then worked until he could control the plowing depth while driving the team. These earnest efforts finally qualified him as the first and best plower among the Beijing youths in the village.

One of my friends, settled in Inner Mongolia, was forced to adapt to nomadic life on the grassland. Writing of his experience in a personal letter he told the following story:

> When I first rode on horseback, I was terribly scared and fell hard on the ground. My knees were severely scraped and my arms became swollen. In the evening local herdsmen sent me herb dressing for the wound and explained the essentials of horse riding. I was fully aware that failure to become an adequate horseman would keep me from doing any herding and I would thus be considered useless on the pasture land. I tried again the next day but fell again. The most terrible experience was an accident in which I was trampled by the horse's hooves. Fortunately the injury was not serious. I recovered a few days later. I now feel very proud to tell you that I am a qualified horse rider. I am able to control all the horses in the tribe, tamed or untamed. Besides horse riding, I have also learned to do a number of other things. I can predict the change of the weather

> on the Mongolian grassland. I can make myself understood with the Mongolian I have learned. I can make my own tent. . . . In a word, the grassland is not so desolate to me now, I feel more at home.

Learning benefited the educated youths in many ways. Clearly, there were advantages to be obtained by learning to provide for their own livelihood through rural agricultural production techniques. Social knowledge and skills obtained could be equally as important. The most adept educated youths quickly learned to deal effectively and harmoniously with local peasants, demonstrating a profound understanding of life in this social milieu. Such social maturity is rarely obtained at any age.

Being Self-sustaining Versus Dependent on Outside Aid

Once relocated in the rural villages, educated youths were forced to provide their own food and firewood. These were the two most critical survival needs. Two basic strategies were employed: either they became completely self-sustaining or they received supplements from some outside source (usually from parents and relatives).

Table 1 (next page) summarizes five categories of daily needs for educated youth in the Duntou Brigade of Taishan County, Guangdong Province. Twelve youths were settled in this brigade from Taicheng Town (County Seat): 6 males and 6 females. The average age was 18.4 years. They were sent down in the form Jiti Chadui (group insertion into the team) and organized into a collective household, farming and sharing their food and income.

Across five daily needs categories Duntou youths were largely successful in becoming self-sustaining by using a number of supplementation actions. From 1968 to 1970 they reclaimed 20 mu (3.3 acres) of land with the permission of the brigade and the team. The ability to become completely self-sustaining was not common among rusticated youths. Such success depended on local land resources, climate, support from peasants and local authorities, solidarity of the youths' group, the youths' skill and ability in farming and caring for private plots, etc. The Duntou youths' success resulted mainly from their ability to satisfy these conditions. First, they maintained strong solidarity across the years, which was rare among Jiti Chadui people. Second, they were already intimately familiar with local conditions since they were relocated to an area 20 miles away from their parents.

Table 1
Duntou Brigade Educated Youth: Daily Needs Met from Collective Allocation and Self-supplementation, 1970[a]

Daily Needs	Amount Needed per Person	Amount Allocated from the Collective Sector	Amount to be Supplemented	Ways of Supplementation	Amount Supplemented	Balance
Husked rice	480 jin[b] (1 year)	350 jin	130 jin	Grew sweet potatoes, taro and potatoes in private plots opened with permission of the Brigade	sweet potatoes: 200 jin; taro: 200 jin; potatoes: 100 jin[c]	+36 jin
Edible oil	6 jin (1 year)	3.6 jin	2.4 jin	Grew peanuts on private plots (sandy soil) and used peanuts to trade for cooking oil	15 jin	+9 jin
Firewood	650 jin (dried)	None	650 jin	1) Collected firewood for themselves; 2) collected cane in the hills that was used to make furniture to trade for firewood or sell to buy firewood	Barely enough to meet daily needs	0
Vegetables	A daily requirement	None	Enough to meet daily needs	Grew vegetables in private plots during all seasons of the year	More than enough to meet daily needs, leaving some to sell in the markets	Surplus
Meat	Modest amount required infrequently	Inadequate amount provided by State coupon	Enough to meet daily needs	Raised pigs and chickens; 60% of pork sold to State, as required; 40% for own consumption	Enough to meet daily needs	0

[a]Data from an educated youth who once served in the local commune administration
[b]1 jin = 0.5 kilograms
[c]Following local conversion, 3 jin of starch plant = 1 jin of rice.

Third, most came from families of craftsmen, blacksmiths, carpenters, and peddlers. In sum, being self-supporting by producing one's necessities was more natural and acceptable to them than for those described below.

Three li (about 1 mile) away from Duntou, the Annan brigade situation was quite different. Educated youth from Guangzhou (Canton), the provincial capital, were relocated here. For nearly five years these youths received money and grain coupons in the mail from parents and relatives still in the city. Returning from home visits in Guangzhou, they brought enough rice, sugar, canned food, and bacon to last up to a year.

Why should Annan youths respond so differently from those living in the neighboring village of Duntou? A complete analysis requires more detail than can be given in this article, but several major differences between the two groups can be identified. First, the 108 educated Annan youths never shared incomes or cooperated to form work groups in the private fields. This disunity reduced their ability to cope with the new environment. Second, the Annan youths were from Guangzhou, a provincial capital with more comfortable living conditions. Their parents were all salaried State employees: teachers, artists, government staff, and factory workers. Since they came from families with stable incomes and more comfortable homes, accepting the "self-supporting by self-producing" lifestyle was more difficult for the Annan youths. Third, they did not develop close relationships with the local peasants as did youths in Duntou. Many refused to share peasant values and concerns. Instead, their primary interest focused on returning to the city or going to college.

"Being in Their Need"

Adapting to rural life was heavily influenced by the youths' relationships with locals. Peasants had many needs that were difficult to satisfy in the rural villages. Many youths actively sought to help the peasants by "being in their need" (*ji qi suoxu*), working in the government-sponsored program which aimed to utilize the youths' special skills. By helping the locals in some way, these youths believed they gave more meaning and significance to their own presence in the village and gained more trust from the peasants.

Prime examples of this strategy are the barefoot doctors who worked in rural areas lacking medical service. An official account elaborates the story of Sun Lizhe, one of 30,000 Beijing youths settled in Yenan, who was selected by the national government as a model

barefoot doctor (Xiao Bing 1976). Knowing the needs for medical service in the village where he was sent, Sun went to Beijing for hospital training. Afterwards he was able to bring medicine and lifesaving surgical equipment back to the village. In his own village clinic he saw patients during the day and studied surgery textbooks at night. He experimented on chickens, rabbits, pigs, and dogs. He even tried some techniques on himself. He operated on his ingrown toenail, considering this a good chance to practice. His self-administered local anesthetic was not very effective, but he persisted in spite of the sharp pain. He later learned to use acupuncture anesthesia as a supplementary means during surgery. There was no report of any major surgical failures on his part. The amount of work he allegedly did with such poorly equipped medical facilities is amazing: from 1969 through 1974, Sun saw 50,000 patients and performed 2,000 major and minor operations. Apparently he was the most successful person in adopting the strategy of "being in their need."

Other less dramatic examples document the usefulness of this adaptation strategy. In areas with severe land shortages, the imposition of educated youths created additional hardship. By using their contacts with their homes in urban areas, many youths were able to offer important supplements to the local peasants' diets through the purchase of highly valued brick tea and other merchandise from the outside.

"When in Rome Do as the Romans Do"

The rustication program assigned educated youths to all areas of China. Not surprisingly, local customary practices were extremely variable and diverse. Often the relocated youths were totally unfamiliar with the local practices they encountered. Sometimes these practices were associated with traditional or religious values contradicting Socialist norms and ideals instilled in the urban youths' minds for many years. Quite understandably their first impressions were sometimes negative. Some youths tried to ignore or avoid contact with the local practices. In extreme cases, others initiated action against the local peasants.

As one example, many relocated youths encountered the traditional practice of bride price. Under the bride-price system peasants spent large sums of money, sometimes their life's savings, for their son's marriage. Some relocated youths, conforming to State standards, criticized peasants in newspaper articles and political meetings, demanding an end to bride price as "mercenary marriage" and

"feudal vestiges." Some even reported the "offending" peasants to the commune. Though officially and legally justified, their actions rarely diminished the local practice. More often, the youths' relations with the local peasant were negatively affected.

The longer they remained in the village the more pragmatic most relocated youths became, as they experienced little success in changing the behavior of local peasants and encountered strong social sanctions against themselves. They gradually realized they were not hosts but guests. As such they found that a more productive coping strategy involved respecting their hosts and conforming to the local customs.

Adopting local customs could be taken to an extreme. I learned of some Beijing youths from a village in South Shanxi Province who "went local." They dressed as the local peasants did, with wide turbans wound around their heads. They spoke the local dialect in communicating with local residents and could even make jokes with them. When they were not working they participated in nearly all village ceremonies, including marriage and funeral ceremonies. They even went beyond the formal parts of the ceremony and joined in a kind of local customary practice known as "bustling in the bridal chamber" (*nao xinfang*). By local rule, "bustling in the bridal chamber" required the bride to pretend to sleep with the local village fellows before she could actually start married life.

Sometimes following local customs was not so enjoyable. At Qiongshan, a county at the foot of Mt. Wuzhi on China's Hainan Island, some relocatees found it painful to follow the local way of life. Liang Rirong, a high school graduate from Maoming city, was shocked when he faced the first dinner served by his Li village host. It included uncooked salted snakes and field rats with a stinking smell. He felt like vomiting and refused to eat. To avoid this embarrassing situation he wanted to move out and go live with other students' host families. However, he learned that all the host families had prepared the same kind of food to honor their student guests. The snakes and the rats served had been cured and preserved for over a year and were common feast food in the villages of Mt. Wuzhi. To show respect to the Li people's customs the youths had to eat, or at least taste, such food when served or else they could be considered unfriendly and possibly be driven out of the village. Encouraged by fellow students and army soldiers stationed near the village who had tried the food, Liang decided to try it himself. He forced himself to gulp it down mouthful by mouthful, pretending to be comfortable with the strange tastes. During the more than three years he lived in the Li people's village, Liang never did feel completely comfortable with the food. However,

he had the determination to accept the food without leaving an unfriendly impression on his host.

Intermarriage with the Locals

One coping strategy was marriage to the local peasants. Marrying a local peasant entailed a lifetime commitment to remaining in the rural village. Due to differences in socialization experiences, personal interests, and educational attainments, many educated youths found it hard to develop intimate relationships with local peasants, let alone marry one. Peasants also had feelings of inadequacy in the face of the educated youths. While some young urbanites looked down on rural youths as "*tuqi*" (rough, rustic, unsophisticated), the peasants often considered educated youths as "*yangqi*" (a derogatory term referring to a foreign outlandish and ostentatious style).

Such antipathy was not true for all. After living in the village for a while some young urbanites developed favorable feelings toward the rural youths, attributing a kind of fine quality or natural beauty to their rural lifestyle. On the other hand, rural youths could be attracted by the urbane manner, intelligence, and knowledge of the urbanites. Affection could grow during joint labor participation or through the assistance provided by the rural youths to the urbanites. Sometimes these feelings grew to love and even to marriage, disregarding lifestyle differences, parental objections, or permanent commitment to rural life.

According to a 1974 investigative report carried in *Renmin Ribao* (People's Daily), "certain resettled educated youths regard themselves as permanent residents in the village once they get married" (Seybolt 1977:179). This was basically true because the only opportunities to get out of the countryside were in recruitment by factories, universities, and the People's Liberation Army. These units did not recruit or enroll married youths in the years of Cultural Revolution. The refusal to make a more permanent commitment to living in the countryside could be one of the more important reasons why the marriage rates between educated youths and rural youths was fairly low. As shown in Bernstein's study, "In Kirin, as of December 1975, 50,000 out of 800,000 urban youths (6.3%) had gotten married, and in Liaoning as of May 1976, 80,000 out of 1.2 million (6.7%)" (Bernstein 1977:165).

The mere act of marrying locals might or might not be proof of better adaptation to rural life. More accurately, the lifetime commitment included in the choice to marry a local undoubtedly had an

effect on the educated youth's perception of rural life. Compared with those remaining in a rusticated youth group, married urban youths became members of a rural family and assumed the additional responsibilities for his or her immediate family members as well as rural affinal kin. With time, the educated youths married to rural peasant youths appeared to accept the rural lifestyle.

Conclusion

While many youths, as discussed above, coped with the new social milieu by actively adapting themselves, others resisted. When they failed to overcome either the initial or long-term adjustment crises they would try to evade rural hardship or leave the countryside. For instance, under the excuse of poor health some stayed away from labor participation or even returned to the city for a long-term convalescence. The adaptability of educated youth to rural life varied from person to person. Related to such variation were a number of complex social, cultural, psychological, and physiological factors. These included socialization experience, inclinations and interests, desire for upward mobility, educational attainment, physical stamina, previous economic living conditions, and political approach. Often one adaptive response was the combined result of more than one of these variables. But, by and large, rustication adaptability appears to be heavily dependent on the following conditions.

For youths who grew up in families with better economic living conditions, relocating to rural villages obviously entailed more dramatic lifestyle changes. These youths usually had more difficulties accommodating themselves to rural hardship. Family socialization was also important. Children from families with professors, engineers, doctors, and scientists typically experienced more serious crises when "permanently" resettling in rural villages. These crises resulted from the conflict of rural life with their family's emphasis on achievement in terms of high scholarship. Although such achievement concepts contradicted Mao Zedong's ideology, the youths were already so deeply affected that they could not eradicate them.

Upwardly mobile youths generally found adaptation to rural village life more difficult. Those with professional goals in mathematics, astronomy, engineering, and art experienced more serious difficulties than youths seeking manual occupations such as carpenter, blacksmith, or hotel servant.

Urban youths primarily motivated by political enthusiasm and idealistic aspirations without an accompanying knowledge of the realities of rural village life found that the ways of production and the levels of material life contradicted their preconception, causing great crises. Furthermore, urban youths without the physical strength and endurance required for rural life adapted less easily to manual labor.

Youths resettled in nearby rural areas met with less differences in culture, language, climate, and lifestyle than those relocated to more distant localities. As expected, these youths resettled closer to home adapted more easily.

The rustication program involved a massive transfer of educated youths from high living-standard locations to areas of lower living standards. Implementing this program involved several imperatives: substituting a more idealistic or lofty goal for people's natural desire to strive for immediate material interests; reinforcing these idealistic goals with practical administrative measures designed to minimize the effects of resettlers' preferences for their previous better living conditions; and assisting resettlers, when necessary, with modest supplements to make them more adaptive to the new milieu.

The rustication program abated gradually after Mao's death. Due to changes in official policies, a significant proportion of educated youths were recruited back to cities for urban employment and university education. In recent years, as the government began to see more clearly the problem of increasing population in the countryside, as well as some of the practical problems involved in the implementation of the rustication program, the policy of sending down educated youth was substantially changed. Most of the urban school graduates are now allowed to stay in the cities to seek employment, although the state can provide jobs for only some of them. The rest stay unemployed, participate in job training programs, or start private business ventures. The analysis of the entire rustication campaign goes well beyond the scope of the present discussion because the program involved complex social ideological, political, and economic factors including urban unemployment, rural development, and political rivalry.

The rustication program involved both losses and gains for the educated youth. For example, while temporary suspension of their formal education caused many to forget much useful knowledge, the rustication program provided opportunities to make contact with the Chinese peasants, who account for more than 80% of the entire population. Many urban educated youths thus now understand Chinese rural society better and have acquired practical skills and

knowledge that would not have been obtained in the urban school classroom. Shaped by tough, rigorous rural environments they are undoubtedly more practical and realistic in facing life and stronger in dealing with difficulty, hardships, and life crises.

The campaign produced a lasting impact both on the generation directly involved and on the society as a whole. In terms of its special characteristics, such as the proportion of the population involved, close association with ideology, direction of shift in living standard, and movement across important social boundaries, the rustication program was a rare phenomenon in the history of human migration.

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10

Transmigration Policies in Indonesia: Government Aims and Popular Response

Oekan Soekotjo Abdoellah

Introduction

In Indonesia the idea of resettlement from densely populated Java to the outer islands, which is now known as transmigration, dates back to Sir Thomas Raffles who first suggested it in 1814. The idea was taken up again by van Deventer in 1899 when he included it in his formula for development: "education, irrigation, and emigration" (Pelzer 1945:191). In 1905 the first government-sponsored migration scheme was initiated by the Dutch colonial government which termed it a "colonization" program. After independence the government of Indonesia developed its own "colonization program" but called it "transmigration."

The transmigration policy had multiple purposes: 1) to relieve population pressure in Java, 2) to secure economic development in the outer islands, 3) to secure and defend the marginal regions of the nation, and 4) to increase cultural assimilation, political integration, and economic consolidation to the end of developing Indonesian unity and a single national identity.

The policy of transmigration so far has been a failure even though it has been tried in various forms. In this article I review the reasons for government persistence in sponsoring transmigration and trace the response of those affected by such programs to discover why failure continues. Since the demography of Indonesia is perhaps the most fundamental drive behind the policy, I begin with an examination of demographic factors.

The Demographic Profile of Indonesia

Indonesia is an archipelago of more than 3,000 islands. In 1980 it had a population of 147.5 million. The uneven distribution of that population is reflected in table 1.

Table 1
Population Distribution in Indonesia
1930, 1961, 1971, and 1980[a]

Island	Percent of population				Average annual increase (%)		
	1930	1961	1971	1980	1930-61	1961-71	1971-80
Java & Madura	68.7	65.0	63.8	61.9	1.3	1.9	2.0
Sumatra	13.5	16.2	17.5	19.0	2.1	2.9	3.3
Kalimantan	3.6	4.2	4.4	4.5	2.1	2.4	2.8
Sulawesi	6.9	7.3	7.1	7.1	1.7	1.8	2.2
The other islands	7.3	7.3	7.2	7.5	1.6	2.0	2.8
Indonesia	100	100	100	100	1.5	2.1	2.3

[a]Adopted from Pardoko 1982:4.

In 1930 Java had 69% of the Indonesian population. This dropped to 65% in 1961, 64% in 1971, and 62% in 1980 (Pardoko 1982:24). The other islands accommodate only a small fraction of the population. This is due to the fact that Java has the most fertile soils and because most development efforts have been concentrated in Java, providing it with industry, trading facilities, and social amenities.

It has been estimated that the Javanese population was 3.5 million in 1795, grew to 4.5 million in 1815, and reached 9 million during the next 30 years (Pelzer 1945:160). Between 1880, when it reached 19.5 million, and 1940 it doubled again (ibid.). By 1980 Java had 91.3 million people (Pardoko 1982:4).

Even within Java the population is unevenly distributed. High population concentrations are found mainly on well-irrigated lands where the density was around 850 persons per square kilometer in 1980 (Pardoko 1982:5).

Motives for Transmigration

People emigrate for many reasons. Personal difficulties may drive them to leave. There are also the attractions of perceived opportunities, a desire for new experiences, and curiosity. General factors relating to transmigration can be summarized as follows:

1. Economic factors such as imbalances in economic development and employment opportunities between islands; uneven distribution of natural resources; inadequate land to meet family needs (Naim 1974:347; De Jong and Gardner 1981:39; Rao et al. 1980:5, 81; Pryor 1975; Suharso et al. 1975).
2. Sociocultural factors such as traditions of adventurism and the impact of improved communication and transportation networks (Naim 1974:348; Pryor 1974; Hugo 1979:192; De Jong and Gardner 1981:39).
3. Environmental factors such as ecological deterioration or natural calamities (Naim 1974:318; Singarimbun 1980).
4. Educational factors such as the impact of formal education and the search for better educational opportunities (Abdullah 1971; Naim 1974:348; Hugo 1979:190; Suharso et al. 1975).

Mangalam (1968:8) defines migration as "a relatively permanent moving away of a collectivity called migrants, from one geographical location to another preceded by the decision making on the part of the migrants on the basis of a hierarchically ordered set of values or valued ends and resulting in changes in the interactional system of the migrants." For the individual migrant the decision to go is often straightforward.

The individual migrant, according to Naim (1974), is affected by many influences which include a sense of relative deprivation in some important values and the belief that this cannot be overcome at home but may be overcome somewhere else. The selection of where to go is then made in terms of which place is more likely to offer the kind of social and political organization that will allow the migrant to succeed.

Most anthropologists and sociologists have reported that economic motives are of most importance in the decision to migrate, but that readiness to go is also affected by the nature of the local community, its attitudes toward mobility, and the existence of social networks connecting local people to those in other localities. In Indonesia both the Minangkabau of Sumatra and the Buginese of South Sulawesi have a history of mobility which makes migration to other islands a relatively easy decision. On the other hand the Javanese and Sundanese are said to feel close bonds with their homeland. They confirm this by their attitudes and actions. They are usually born, live, and die in the same village. *Kumpul ngariung bongkok ngaroyok* and *Mangan ora mangan ngumpul*, each of which can be translated literally as the "gathering of family members" are Sundanese and Javanese versions of a common Indonesian proverb. Its sense is that "it does not matter whether or not we have enough to eat

as long as we can all be together with our relatives and friends." In the past only catastrophic events led Javanese and Sundanese to emigrate.

In accepting transmigration the Javanese and Sundanese are responding to pressing economic forces, especially land shortage. Land ownership is associated with social status as well as with economic production. A negative relationship exists between land ownership and willingness to emigrate. Residents of villages with land shortages and unequal distribution of land have a high propensity to migrate. Thus poverty, which is manifested in low agricultural incomes, landlessness, low productivity, and underemployment, is the basic cause of Javanese and Sundanese migration. In 1979, with colleagues, I carried out a survey among Javanese transmigrants in Central and South Kalimantan. In all we interviewed 48 male migrants with respect to their reasons for migrating, educational level, occupation, and land holdings in their home villages. Economic factors were overwhelmingly important in their choice to migrate. Of the respondents, 63 percent stated they moved to be able to own land and 26 percent stated they moved to improve their standard of living, while only 6 percent moved to get a better education for their children and 5 percent moved to be with their family.

Table 2
Occupations of Migrants (N=48)[a]

Type of Occupation	Original	Transmigrant
Peasant farmer	11.13%	67.8%
Agricultural wage laborer	49.3	14.0
Peasant farmer & agricultural laborer	5.5	14.0
Agricultural laborer & small retailer	7.8	4.2
Wages from off-farm employment	26.1	—
Total	100%	100%

[a]Based on Karyono 1980.

Some Characteristics of the Transmigrants

Migrants in our interview sample had less education than the national average. Out of 48 respondents only 8.6% had completed primary school; 53% had had some primary schooling; 36.7% had never been to school (Karyono et al. 1980:8). Lack of education

correlates with occupation in both place of origin and place of destination. Most of those interviewed belonged to the poorest stratum of Javanese peasants. They were landless or nearly landless farmers, homeless and often jobless persons. The possibility of land ownership and attendant increased social status provide strong incentives to move. Table 2 shows the backgrounds and new occupations of the transmigrants.

The Dynamics of Transmigration Policies

Dutch Colonial Policies (1905-1941)

In 1905 the Dutch colonial government created a number of "colonies" in the Lampung area of Southern Sumatra as part of its colonization program. The stated purpose of the program was to reduce population pressure in Java so as to affect "the improvement of the welfare of the native population" (Hardjono 1977:16). It is likely that the government was also anxious to ensure the provision of cheap labor for plantations in the outer islands, particularly in Sumatra (Adiwilaga 1970:96).

The first settlement was established in Gedontatanan, Sumatra. Those resettled between 1905 and 1911 received a premium of 20 guilders, free transportation, a new house, living expenses to cover the first two years, and an allowance of 0.4 guilders per day until the land was cleared and irrigation provided. Each family received about 0.7 hectare of rice field (*sawah*) and 0.3 hectare of home garden (*pekarangan*). This farm size was perhaps adequate in Java, but in Sumatra with its poorer soils and less developed irrigation systems more land was needed for an adequate livelihood. Migrants were also given some dry land fields (*kebun*) for root crops if local circumstances permitted. The average cost of settlement per person, from initial move to self-sufficiency, was 300 guilders (Pelzer 1945:192).

In 1911 the government revised the system by reducing the support provided to a premium of 11.5 guilders per family, transportation, and land. Settlers, however, could borrow up to a maximum of 200 guilders per family from a bank created to provide settlement loans at an interest rate of 9%. Loans were to be paid back in ten years, starting from the third year of settlement (Perez-Sainz 1983:193). Additional loans could be obtained after lands were

brought under cultivation. According to Pelzer (1945:193) the new policy failed because Javanese villagers were not accustomed to capital-intensive management. Credit was misused to finance improved consumption. Migrants lived and dressed better than before, and some spent their loans on gambling, alcohol, and opium. The new settlements, however, faced other problems such as competition with private or semiprivate plantations (Suratman and Guinness 1977:79). Migrants also became discouraged by the slowness with which the administration created irrigation systems and by the lack of medical facilities. The selection of migrants was also considered to have been defective. In the early years, therefore, the colonization program failed to meet targets for both number of migrants and productivity in the settlement areas.

Between 1927 and 1931 the migratory flow gained new momentum, but this was a spontaneous movement of families searching for free land who were often going to join kin who had emigrated under the earlier colonization schemes. Such chain migration is a common phenomenon everywhere that people are on the move. In 1927, 914 Javanese migrated to Southern Sumatra without government assistance. Their previously settled kin helped them through the initial phase of settlement (Perez-Sainz 1983:194). Voluntary migration continued even though in 1932 the government began to demand payment for land. In 1932 it also introduced what was known as the *bawon* system. This was essentially a system of sharecropping and was meant to reduce the costs of settlement to government. Migrants had to pay between 22 and 25 guilders toward the cost of transportation and the provision of household tools and utensils, but were given two or three years to pay. The bawon system thus made migration more costly to the settler (Pelzer 1945:203-204).

On January 29, 1937, the government created a central commission for internal migration and colonization (Pelzer 1945:206-210). Henceforth the government used ten criteria in the selection of migrants. These reflected its diagnosis of the causes for earlier failures. Migrants had to be genuine cultivators because non-farmers were a burden to a colony and endangered its success. They had to be physically strong so as to withstand the hardships of pioneering. They had to be young because this slowed population increase in Java. Families were selected because they were likely to be stable and orderly. Conversely, former plantation laborers and those who married to meet the family criteria were not to be selected because they were

considered a likely source of discontent. Nor were couples with young children good candidates because small children were a burden at a time when labor demands were intensive. Families with pregnant women were to be rejected also because the labor of both spouses was needed during the first year. Bachelors were to be rejected because they were thought likely to desert as soon as they were confronted by a difficulty. Finally, preference was to be given to villages (*desas*) or hamlets (*kampungs*). When these were prepared to emigrate the first nine criteria could be ignored.

The more efficient administrative organization resulted in greater success although targets still were not met (Suratman and Guinness 1977:82). Under the colonization programs of the Dutch colonial government (1905-1941) only 189,938 Javanese emigrated to sponsored settlements in the outer islands (Hardjono 1980:36). The population of Java increased to about 19.7 million during the same period (Perez-Sainz 1983:196).

Sukarno's Era (1945-1966)

After Indonesia's independence President Sukarno called transmigration a matter of life and death for the Indonesian nation. He ignored the need for family planning and declared that Java's population problem could be eased by moving 1.5 million people each year to the outer islands (Suratman and Guinness 1977:82). He was very optimistic. In 1953, for example, the plan called for 100,000 to go, but only 40,009 left. Planners ignored the realities of the situation with respect both to the needs of the migrants and the government's ability to provide facilities. No government department during this period understood much of what was involved in planned migration. Policies changed frequently, reflecting both the lack of understanding and the political instability of the first 25 years of independence. Coordination between departments (and later ministries) proved difficult (Hardjono 1977:22-25).

During this period the Indonesian government recognized four categories of transmigration: general, family, spontaneous, and local (Heeren 1979:34-35). Migrants in the "general" category were given government support from the time of their selection through the first eight months of settlement. "Family" transmigration involved volunteer families which went to join kin already settled in the outer islands. Their transportation was paid but other costs had to be met by themselves and their settler kin. Spontaneous migrants were those who paid their own transportation costs because they did not wish to

wait on government red tape or suffer delays in passage. The government provided migrants in these two categories with free land, materials to build houses, farming equipment, fertilizers and seed, and rations. "Local" transmigration involved the secondary resettlement of families moving out from already overcrowded settlements in the outer islands. Their resettlement might or might not be organized by government.

Suharto's Era (1966-present)

During the first years of Suharto's government an average of only about 8,000 families migrated each year (Perez-Sainz 1983:216). The unstable social and economic conditions that followed the Communist Party attempt at a coup d'etat in September 1965 did not encourage transmigration.

In 1969, with the formation of the First Five Year Development Plan, attention again was given to the transmigration program. Under this plan more attention was given to economic specialization in the various settlements to encourage settlements to develop with their own resources. This contrasted with the earlier concern which centered primarily on maximizing the number of settlers. Transmigration was no longer seen merely as a means to reduce population pressure in Java. It was now to be also a development program for the outer islands and a means of ensuring the migrants a better standard of living. Agricultural development, with special emphasis upon rice cultivation, was a major goal (Hardjono 1977:31-33).

During the First Five Year Plan settlers were sent mostly to Sumatra, Kalimantan, Sulawesi, Maluku, and West Irian, which had also been the focus of earlier settlement schemes. More than half went to Sumatra. Table 3 shows the number of migrants by area of settlement.

During the First Five Year Plan new criteria were again adopted for the selection of transmigrants. They had to be of Indonesian nationality and have had no involvement in the Communist movement of September 1965 or in any banned political or mass organization. They had to be genuine farmers or possess other useful skills and be between the ages of 20 and 40, of sound health and good conduct, and of some religious persuasion. Again couples were chosen, but the wife could not be more than 6 months pregnant. Family members between 6 months and 60 years could accompany the couple. After 1976 when the government announced its intention to release all political prisoners, the second criteria no longer applied.

Table 3
Number of migrants by area of settlement[a]

Area of settlement	Time periods					
	1969-70	70-71	71-72	72-73	73-74	
Sumatra	11,112	8,350	9,002	31,783	44,977	105,224
Kalimantan	2,599	3,970	4,748	7,227	8,038	26,582
Sulawesi	4,137	7,442	5,120	11,944	19,049	47,692
Maluku	—	233	—	479	1,001	1,713
West Irian	—	—	—	485	—	485
Total	17,848	19,995	18,870	51,918	73,065	181,696

[a]From the Directorate General for Transmigration (cited in Hardjono 1977:32)

Thereafter the government used transmigration as one solution to the problem of political prisoners. The majority were originally from Java where job opportunities were very limited. Their return home would only lead to more unrest. Moreover, long memories of the violence in 1965 made them unacceptable at home.

The results under the First Five Year Plan again were disappointing, as transmigration continued to suffer from chronic problems of interdepartmental coordination and the lag in the provision of basic infrastructure. In 1972 a significant step toward fundamental reform was taken with the ratification of new legislation (Law No. 3 of 1972). The law stated that "the opening of sparsely populated regions outside Java would exploit their very great economic potential and create broadened employment opportunities. For this reason, transmigration, including local transmigration, must be seriously and purposefully implemented and integrated with regional development activities" (cited in Suratman and Guinness 1977:86). New programs, such as BANPRESS (Special Presidential Funds), were created. BANPRESS provided transmigrants with transportation and basic necessities for four months.

In the Second Five Year Development Plan (1974/75-1978/79), the government planned to increase emigration from Java. Funds from the World Bank, USAID, UNDP, and other foreign agencies enabled it to establish large settlements and it planned to resettle 250,000 families over the five year period (Suratman and Guinness 1977:87). In the end only 68,166 families actually went and not all stayed (Hardjono 1980:36). Again a major cause of failure was the lack of interdepartmental coordination. The Director General of

Transmigration attributed the failure in 1974/75 to BAPPENAS (The National Planning Agency) which was slow in giving permission to implement the year's projects and in making the budget allocation. This in turn delayed giving tenders for land clearance, house construction, and transportation (Jones 1979:216).

In sum, the transmigration program continued to face the same problems it had always faced. It continued to be a failure in terms of creating massive population movements or viable new settlements in the outer islands.

Responses to the Transmigration Program

Reactions to transmigration programs are certainly not the same throughout Indonesia. Host populations vary in their willingness to have colonies settled within their territory. In many instances, especially in Sumatra, migrants are not well received by local people who interpret the program as a process of "Javanisation." Migrants tend to maintain their own festivals, religious practices, material culture, and styles of leadership. They also use the Javanese language almost exclusively (Hardjono 1977:43; Suratman and Guinness 1977:81). But relationships between migrants and local inhabitants have rarely been harmonious (Suratman and Guinness 1977:96). Local people sometimes look on the migrants as poor jobless people and dislike intermarriage with them. Moreover, local people often feel jealous of migrants who receive free land, rations, and other support while they themselves receive no compensation for the land given over to the settlements and rarely benefit from any amenities that may be provided to the migrants. Financial assistance in the form of low-interest government loans is available only to the migrants.

Jealousy has exacerbated potential conflicts arising from cultural differences. As a result those who feel themselves unfairly treated by the government have retaliated against the migrants. Religious differences have also led to conflict. Although migrants and host populations are alike followers of Islam, the Javanese tend to be more syncretic in their practice while Sumatrans are fundamentalists.

Javanese migrants have participated in the transmigration programs for basic economic motives, as indicated earlier. They want to own land, have enough food, and send their children to school. Their view of transmigration, however, is affected by the many problems they face in the new setting. In the past, food rations were inadequate and food shortages common due to the unpredictability of frontier

harvests. The problems of improving poor soils have never been solved or admitted by the government, nor has it been able to provide sufficient fertilizer and seed. Wild pigs, monkeys, and insect pests regularly take a severe toll of harvests. Inadequate infrastructure makes difficult the marketing of agricultural produce (Abdoellah 1983:18-21). Law and order have sometimes been difficult to enforce. Loss of life due to malaria and other ailments has been common. The persistent uncertainty of life leads to anxiety. Migrants have soon realized that frontier conditions raise difficulties far beyond those they had imagined and that these are beyond their ability to solve on their own. They have become resentful that the government does not fulfill its promises.

One migrant's history must stand for many:

> I went to the transmigration area in Way Jepara, South Sumatra. I had joined the program because the government promised us land, a house, and food rations for six months. But at the first moment, after arriving at Way Jepara, I was shocked. I saw logs lying around the house. There were leaks everywhere in the roof. I had to use an umbrella inside the house to keep dry. I had never experienced anything like this in Java. I received food rations but only for the first 3 months. I felt deceived by the government. I was very sick for 3 months because I worked too hard to convert the forest into arable land. When I recovered, I worked as an off-farm laborer in the city nearby to meet my needs. After a few months, I realized that it would be impossible for me to improve life. Finally I felt that I could not stay any longer so I left for Java. [translated from Singarimbun 1980:56]

Many others also returned to Java or moved to cities near their transmigration settlement, thereby creating additional problems for the government.

The uncertainities of life in transmigration areas have become common knowledge throughout Java. As negative experiences accumulated, reluctance to accept transmigration became summed up in the Javanese proverb *Ojo njagake endoge si blorok*. This literally translates as "It is better not to rely on the unlaid egg of the spotted hen." The English equivalent is the proverb: "A bird in the hand is better than two in the bush."

Transmigration: Has it a Future?

Between 1905 and 1978 only about 206,400 families (or about

1,032,000 people) were resettled by the transmigration programs (Tjondronegoro 1983:4). Clearly the programs have not solved the population problems of Java. It is also clear that the financial costs of resettlement run very high. It was equivalent to $500 per family in 1983. In 1982 the government spent about $500 million on the program (Kronholz 1983:23). A really effective large-scale program would require expenditures far beyond the present governmental budget.

Is transmigration then only a waste of government efforts and money? Some argue that it has been and that the transfer of population has resulted only in the transplanting of poverty from Java to the outer islands. The program has failed to increase living standards for the majority of migrants and for those already living in the outer islands, it has done little to increase production, and it has not solved the population problem. To date no cost-benefit analysis of transmigration and industrialization has been attempted. It has been argued, however, that industrial development in Java would give employment to more Javanese than are helped by transmigration.

This argument ignores other benefits associated with the program. As we know, most of the migrants are poor and have never owned land. I think a socioeconomic and psychological value accrues to those who hold land. For many Javanese this now can be realized only through transmigration. Moreover, if transmigration is considered as one among several policies in an integrated program, it has an important role to play.

The fact is that the carrying capacity of Java *has* been exceeded. While Java contains only 7% of the total land area of Indonesia, it has about 80% of the nation's farmers. Population pressure is not solely due to the population explosion. The building of hydroelectric dams to service the cities has also flooded some of the best agricultural land (Abdoellah 1983). The situation is now truly desperate. The number and proportion of landless farmers in Indonesia increased dramatically between 1973 and 1980, from less than 0.5 million (3.2%) in 1973 to more than 2.5 million (14.9%) in 1980. In the same period the number of farmers owning less than 0.5 hectare also increased significantly from about 6.5 million (45.6%) to 11.0 million (63.1%). The majority of these farmers actually till lands of less than 0.25 hectare (Soemarwoto and Soemarwoto 1983:3). In Java farmers who cultivate such minimal holdings now constitute 3/4 of the total number of farmers.

Farms of the size now cultivated by most farmers cannot provide a decent standard of living. Based upon a poverty level of a per cap-

ita income equivalent to 240 kilograms of rice per year, 54% of Java's farmers are below the poverty line (Hansen 1981:6). The adoption of the agricultural development program known as the Green Revolution has created a widening gap between the poor and the rich. Mechanization has been gaining in some areas and consequently unemployment among agricultural laborers is increasing. The situation also has adverse consequences for the environment: deforestation, increased flooding during the rainy season, erosion, and water shortage during the dry season.

The Malthusian nightmare seems to fit the situation better than Boserup's (1965) optimistic view that increasing population leads to increased production.

Industrialization is one of the alternative solutions proposed to cure Java's economic backwardness and population pressure, but in fact industrialization has absorbed only a small number of skilled laborers from the rural population. Centralization of industry on Java, moreover, has created an inverse migration from the outer islands as those with the most education move to the center.

I hold that at least some Javanese must move to the outer islands. Their departure eases possible tensions and hostilities arising among small farmers who have reached the limits of exploitable land at home. The removal of the landless also allows the government to preserve some buffer zones in Java which are in danger of being destroyed as even marginal land is being taken into cultivation. Possibilities exist for industrialization in the outer islands for they have natural resources such as mines, timber, and oil. These are now being exploited by foreign investors using low labor-intensive technologies. The government could play a more active role in these cases in developing opportunities for employment.

Transmigration, moreover, has a role to play in the government's efforts to achieve political integration. When separatist movements developed in West and East Sumatra in the 1950s and also in Northern Sulawesi and the Moluccas, a major issue was the appeal to provincial ethnic identities. Although ethnicity was not the sole source of conflict, it was a convenient disguise for ideological struggles. The troops sent by the central government had the assistance of transmigrants in subduing the rebellion and could also rely upon the local knowledge of army personnel, who were descendants of migrants who left Java early in the century.

A review of the political implications of transmigration was published recently by Hastings (1983). He argues that the Indonesian

government intends one day to invade and annex Papua New Guinea, a charge also made by Epel Tito, the former Defense Minister of Papua New Guinea, who was dismissed two weeks after he made his statement (Sinar Harapan 1983). Hastings wrote, "many Papua New Guineans see the program of transmigration as cultural imperialism; it threatens traditional Melanesian values" (1983:4). Both Hastings and Tito misinterpret Indonesia's intentions. Transmigration is not a movement to Javanize the outer islands and extend the Indonesian state. It is an effort to integrate that state by providing its people with common economic, cultural, and political interests.

Though the results of transmigration programs so far have been disappointing, we have gained experience which should lead to better planning and execution. Based on my own work with migrants I offer here some suggestions toward this end.

1) Transmigration must be seen within a larger context. It cannot of itself solve Indonesia's economic and population problems. For one, it needs to be supplemented by a strong family-planning program to reduce the birth rate.

2) Greater stress should be placed on spontaneous transmigration, for those who go in this fashion have tended to make more rapid progress towards self-sufficiency than the government-sponsored migrants (Hardjono 1977:97-98; Suratman and Guinness 1977:99). Spontaneous migrants are reported to have a sense of entrepreneurship and strong motivation to improve their lot. They also have idealism. Government could aid them by providing better infrastructural facilities such as marketing facilities, roads, transportation services, and educational facilities. Above all it should work to develop sources of livelihood outside the agricultural sector. The "growth center" idea which was suggested by Hardjono (1977:14-15) would do much to attract a spontaneous flow of permanent transmigrants.

3) The government should facilitate better agricultural technology appropriate to each region. Animal husbandry should be given more attention. The introduction of livestock would provide a certain amount of natural fertilizer, while meat, milk, and hides could provide a supplemental income. Attention also needs to be given to crops other than rice, which has been the principal focus of government policy in settlement areas. Settlers should be encouraged to develop home gardens and dry-land farms (Christanty, Iskandar, and Abdoellah 1982:11-12).

Most of the migrants come from Java where such agriculture is highly developed and they probably would do well with comparable gardens in the new areas.

4) The government's criteria for selection of migrants needs revision. Bachelors, who are not considered desirable candidates at the present time, ought to be prime targets for recruitment. They have more strength and motivation than older married men. They might also intermarry with local people, and so create badly needed ties between host and settler populations.

5) Since lack of coordination has plagued all transmigration projects, some reorganization at the government level is needed to provide an integrated policy to deal with transmigration, and some agency should be given power to obtain action from the 43 Directorate Generals in 11 Ministries who may be involved in the implementation of that policy.

Finally, I emphasize that success depends very largely on the migrants themselves and the people among whom they settle. The government needs to bring them into the planning of what is to be done and to this end should encourage the creation of organizations at the local level.

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11

Regressivism in the Progressive Era: Immigrants, Eugenists, and Ethnic Displacement

Scott M. Morgan

Introduction

In the recent past, immigrants and their descendants have been a concern to host populations in many parts of the world. One example is the post-World War II movement of immigrants into Western Europe and the volatile situations they have experienced in relation to natives, especially since the economic hardships of the mid-seventies. Right-wing groups in the form of the working- and middle-class National Front in Britain (Taylor 1979), the Centrum-Partij in the Netherlands, the Front National in France, and neo-Nazi groups in West Germany have rallied against the immigrant populations in their countries (Nielsen 1984). Anti-immigrant sentiment in these countries has a wider base than just the formal members of these parties; it is seen in housing, employment, and educational discrimination as well as in popular prejudices (Jowell and Prescott-Clarke 1971; Klee 1971 and 1975; Phizacklea and Miles 1979; Meier-Braun 1980; Linke 1983; Nielsen 1984). Officials in France and Britain have expressed interest in the United States and its ways of dealing with its immigrant, ethnic, and racial populations (Nielsen 1984:45). This paper concerns one period in U.S. history, from the end of the nineteenth century to the 1920s, and a dramatically negative way of portraying newcomers and their children through the racial doctrines of eugenics.

In the first quarter of this century, "progressivism" in the United States was associated with an evolutionary ideology and the belief that society could be advanced by active reform. However, progression was far from being perceived as inevitable by all Americans. Many felt that regression or retrogression—"evolution working backward" (Slosson 1922:377) or "reversed social selection" (Wolfe 1923:415)—characterized contemporary society. J.H. Kellogg, Superintendent of the Battle Creek Sanitarium, observed:

> We promote race degeneracy by our neglect, by creating a new and horribly depreciated species of human kind, physical and moral monsters who are corrupting the blood of the race and threatening its very extinction. [1915:76]

This statement, made at the Second National Conference on Race Betterment in 1915, referred to Kellogg's perception of the chronic lack of State control over the reproduction of "lunatics, idiots, criminals and paupers" (ibid.). One of the primary reasons for the creation of organizations such as the Race Betterment Foundation was alarm over the declining birth rate of the American Anglo-Saxon "race" in relation to the foreign born, their descendants, and its own "defectives." There is apparent in the eugenic literature a collapsing of the images of these latter groups into one symbol of "defectiveness" that threatened the "purity" of an ideal homogeneous white America. The prospect of ethnic displacement in its demographic, economic, and political manifestations was perhaps the major contributing factor in hostility towards immigrants.

Twenty-eight million immigrants came to the U.S. between 1880 and 1930, equalling more than half of the total immigration between 1820, when immigration recording began, and 1981. The only periods in U.S. history when more than five million immigrants per decade entered occurred during the 1880s, 1900s, and 1910s. The only occurrences of yearly influxes of more than one million persons per year took place during 1905-7, 1910, and 1913-14. The distinction between "old" and "new" immigrants began to be made in the 1890s, when roughly equal numbers of both types immigrated. The "old" type were from Western and Northern Europe: the United Kingdom, Germany, Ireland, the Scandinavian countries, the Netherlands, Belgium, France, and Switzerland; the "new" were from Southern, Central, and Eastern Europe: Italy, Austria, Hungary, Russia, Poland, Greece, Portugal, Romania, and Spain. Between 1901 and 1920, the 2,908,229 immigrants in the "old" category were overshadowed by the 9,460,922 "new" who came to the U.S. (all figures in this paragraph from INS 1981:1-3).

From the 1880s to the 1920s, the drama of the newcomer influx to the United States was matched only by the drama of the native-born American hostility towards them. The United States entrance into World War I temporarily prevented immigration but aroused further fears of the divisiveness of a multiethnic population. With the end of the war Americans again began to think about the dangers of renewed immigration. The Immigration Act of 1924 quelled both the possibility and fear of future influx by initiating the "two percent

quotas," which discriminated against Southern, Central, and Eastern Europeans by basing quotas on the proportions of each nationality represented in the U.S. census of 1890, and the national origins provision, implemented in 1927, which based quotas on the 1920 census (Bernard 1950:24-27).

This paper examines the forms of hostility toward the newcomers and some of the sociocultural factors associated with them. After discussion of some of the historical circumstances of the Progressive Era, I will show how the most rigidified and hostile views towards the newcomers represented caste attitudes and were expressed through the doctrine of eugenics. I will then take up the question of the newcomers' political "direct threat" to the eugenic interests. Many social scientists have attempted to explain host hostility, racism, and interethnic conflict with either scapegoat or direct threat models. These models have most often been applied as if the hosts were concerned only with contemporary circumstances. I advocate that, in addition, we should look at the host's perception of the likelihood of their own group's survival in a future dominated by immigrants as an important motivating force of hostility.

The Progressive Era and Reform

The decades immediately preceding the turn of the century up to the first World War are known as the Progressive Era, a time marked by organized attempts to transform and take control of a rapidly changing society. After the Civil War, the United States underwent a massive transformation from a largely agrarian and atomistic society to one which was increasingly urban, industrial, and interconnected. Progressivism has been seen as a reaction to the alienating qualities of these new conditions, resulting in "reforms" of political initiative, referendum, recall, labor laws, increased government control over business, and anti-poverty, public hygiene, and mental hygiene movements. The diversity of interests were such that it is a misnomer to speak of a Progressive "movement" (Filene 1972). No one group emerged with a well-defined membership acting with a definite purpose, so the ferment can more accurately be seen as an "era" (Bernstein and Matusow 1972:36). Historians have variously portrayed the era's activity as "for the people" against dishonest politicians and businessmen (Grob and Billias 1972:161-2), as an organizational and bureaucratization movement based on the "stressed ideals of efficiency, order, rationality, and systematic control" (ibid.:169), or as

a movement also participated in by the lower classes and immigrants (Huthmacher 1972). Historian Richard Hofstader has contended that the progressives were middle-class native Americans whose status was displaced by the parvenu industrialists (1955b). While this position is most clearly allied with my own, the eugenic element within the progressives was more concerned with immigrants, the new threat from below, than with the new threat from above.

Of the changes in thinking at this time, historians Gerald Grob and George Billias have noted:

> The rise of American industry in the decades following the Civil War was a development whose impact can hardly be exaggerated. It involved more than a shift from a commercial and agrarian economy to an urban and industrial one; indeed, it effected fundamental changes in the nature and quality of American society. The far-reaching technological and industrial innovations forced Americans to reexamine their traditional values and beliefs, many of which seemed obsolete, if not irrelevant, to the problems of a new age. [1972:159]

Thus, as America was being remade, its way of thinking had to be remade to fit the new circumstances, but there was a lag between the structural changes and new modes of thought and action, and a lack of consensus on the proposed plans. Ambivalence was marked, as the optimism about the good of "social progress" conflicted with reform ideals that were based on pessimistic beliefs that monopolistic corporations and politics were "evils of society."

Eugenics

Historically, biology has been one guiding model used to generate explanations and understanding of many aspects of reality, and was prevalent during the Progressive Era. Eugenics was officially founded by Francis Galton in England in the 1880s in the context of Social Darwinism, but its social program differed in one important aspect from the latter. While Social Darwinism supported laissez-faire ideals and the survival of the fittest, that is, while it did not condone government intervention in either the business or welfare arenas, eugenics supported activism by encouraging the reproduction of the "fit" and the limitation of the breeding of the "unfit" (Hofstader 1955a:164). In this way, eugenics coincided with the general reform ideology of progressivism. Its popularity is indicated not only by the extensive original writing of this period, but also by the translations of

previous heredity-based European works, such as Arthur de Gobineau's *The Inequality of Human Races* (1915) or summations of criminal anthropology such as Havelock Ellis' *The Criminal* (1897) and Gina Lombroso-Ferrero's *Criminal Man* (1911) based on her father's work.

Within this background of "naturalism" which pervaded early twentieth-century scholarly thought (Pickens 1968), eugenics was the most reductionist biological explanatory model, as it assumed that psychology, intelligence, morality, economic and political capacities, sexual drive, and fecundity were directed by the "germ-plasm" inherited from parents. That is, eugenists maintained that all social life was based on heredity and thereby attributed social problems to the inner capacities of those who suffered from them rather than to any external, societal factors.

"Eugenists" here refers to members of organized groups, such as the Eugenics Record Office and the Race Betterment Foundation, as well as to a category of writers who espoused biological ideals taken from eugenical theory. They consisted of intellectuals—educators, social and physical scientists, physicians, social workers—and many politicians, businessmen, and even ministers. The backgrounds of these reformers were mostly middle and upper class, and there was a conscious Anglo-Saxon "old stock" identification whether or not in fact one traced descent through the Founding Fathers.

The line of contrasts between the eugenists and the immigrants was drawn across many social indicators: the Anglo-Saxon Protestant, native-born, middle and upper classes versus the Southern, Central, and Eastern European Catholic and Jewish foreign-born working classes. Germans were seen positively until the entry of the United States in World War I. The Irish had begun to be politically active in the 1880s, and while they sometimes were pictured as relatively innocuous (Solomon 1956:153-154), Moynihan has pointed out that "there was a touch of Sambo in the professional Irishman: he was willing to be welcomed on condition that he not forget his place" (1968:89). The position of the Irish in relation to the new immigrants and the progressives is further explored in my last section.

Although the focus of this article is on the eugenists' attitudes towards the so-called new immigrants, it is important to note that other "races" in the U.S. were also perceived as threats. While Chinese immigrants had been excluded formally since 1882 and the Japanese informally with the Gentleman's Agreement of 1907, those already living in the western states, especially California, were subjected to eugenic scrutiny and discrimination. Blacks, many of whom

had migrated from the South to work in World War I industries, were in 1917 and 1919 the targets of riots in St. Louis and Chicago, respectively (Report . . . 1917; Drake and Cayton 1962:65-69), as well the subjects of many eugenic texts (e.g., Davenport 1912b:154-155; Davenport and Steggerda 1929; East and Jones 1919; Hoffman 1923; Popenoe and Johnson 1918:280-297; Webber 1914:162-165). Mexican immigration also increased during the war and prompted eugenic response, and the U.S. began to restrict their numbers in 1928 (Cardoso 1980:125,132-134,140).

The eugenists did not consider the discipline of American anthropology a serious threat during this period, especially the type developed by Franz Boas and his followers. Boas was responsible for one of the forty-two volumes of the Reports of the Immigration Commission, a study created in 1907 by Theodore Roosevelt and Congress. Boas' report, *Changes in Bodily Form of Descendants of Immigrants*, showed that the differences between the head shapes of Sicilian and Jewish immigrants were greater than those between their American-born children, and that "while heretofore we had the right to assume that human types are stable, all the evidence is now in favor of a great plasticity of human types, and permanence of types in new surroundings appears rather as the exception than as the rule" (Boas 1911:506). Boas' findings were incongruent with the results of the other reports, which favored the desirability of the old immigrants. Unable to ignore Boas, the commission cautioned that more research was needed before his results could be accepted (Handlin 1957:130-131). The eugenists occasionally referred to Boas as someone whose statements were preposterous and unscientific (e.g., Popenoe and Johnson 1918:41,282-283; Sergi 1912). Furthermore, while Boas had developed a strong following within his own discipline, his opponents in anthropology were more susceptible to the influence of the leaders of eugenics, who anthropologist Pliny Goddard perceived to hold that "our cultural stuff was getting nowhere, that we weren't scientists anyway, that it is time to take things out of our hands and really get down to business" (1918 letter to A. Kroeber cited in Stocking 1968:290). Perhaps the most signal example of the dominance of eugenics over cultural anthropology occurred during the first World War. The National Research Council, formed to tap the knowledge of American scientists for the war effort, did not want cultural or anti-war anthropologists to head its Committee on Anthropology. With the somewhat reluctant approval of anthropologists Ales Hrdlicka and William Holmes, the Council appointed Charles Davenport and Madison Grant, the two most well known eugenists (Stocking 1968:288).

Eugenics in the United States was first formalized in 1903 within the American Breeders Association by setting up research committees under Charles Davenport, the biologist who directed much of the American eugenics movement. The ten committees concerned the heredity of mental traits, deaf-mutism, eye defects, criminality, insanity, epilepsy, feeble-mindedness, and the topics of genealogy, sterilization, and immigration (Laughlin 1913:9-10). The motives of the eugenists regarding immigrants were clear from the beginning; the chair and one of the members of the Committee on Immigration were Prescott Hall and Robert DeC. Ward, founders of the Immigration Restriction League (IRL). The IRL was formed in Massachusetts by Hall and Ward in 1893, and they were anxious to join with the eugenists in order to lobby more successfully for restrictive legislation. In 1910, Mrs. E. H. Harriman, wife of the railroad magnate, granted funds to Davenport to establish the Eugenics Record Office next to the Carnegie Station for Experimental Evolution in Cold Spring Harbor, New York (van Wagenen 1912:460). At the 1912 First International Eugenics Congress, a "Preliminary Report of the Committee of the Eugenic Section of the American Breeders' Association to Study and to Report on the Best Practical Means for Cutting Off the Defective Germ-Plasm in the Human Population" stated that the American Breeders Association (ABA) committees and the Eugenics Record Office cooperated closely with each other (van Wagenen 1912:460). The chairman of the ABA Eugenics Section reported the goals to the two groups, as well as to all eugenists:

> Members of the following classes must be considered as socially unfit, and their supply, if possible, be eliminated from the human stock: (1) the feeble-minded; (2) the pauper class; (3) the criminal class; (4) the epileptics; (5) the insane; (6) the constitutionally weak, or the asthenic class; (7) those predisposed to specific diseases, or the diathetic class; (8) the deformed; (9) those having defective sense organs, as the blind and the deaf, or the kakaisthetic class. [ibid.:462]

The eugenists made the connection between immigrants and members of these classes in their family studies. They compiled family histories of selected rural American families through the use of institutional records, observation, and interviews, and these "famous families," through their pseudonyms, became known throughout America as the Jukes, the Kallikaks, the Nams, the Tribe of Ishmael, and many others. Through the collection of genealogies these families were found to be descended from immigrants, who were almost always non-British (Dugdale 1910:14; Davenport and Estabrook 1912:2;

Finlayson 1916:3), who married across "races" (Danielson and Davenport 1912:1; Davenport and Estabrook 1912:2), or were of uncertain origin (Goddard 1912:18). One example, concerning the Jukes, will be sufficient to indicate what the views of these families were:

> The almost universal traits of the family were idleness, ignorance, and vulgarity. They would not work, they could not be made to study, and they loved vulgarity. These characteristics led to disease and disgrace, to pauperism and crime. They were a disgustingly diseased family as a whole. There were many imbeciles and many insane. Those of "the Jukes" who tended to pauperism were rarely criminal, and those who were criminal were rarely paupers. The sick, the weak, and goody-goody ones were almost all paupers; the healthy, strong ones were criminals. [Winship 1900:11]

Every one of these studies enumerated the fantastic costs of these families to the state through their pauperism, institutionalization, and property damage. Henry Goddard's study of the Kallikak family told the story of Martin Kallikak, of good colonial stock, who had a child with a nameless feeble-minded girl before he settled down to marriage with a normal woman. The first encounter led to 480 descendants, of whom only 46 were normal (Goddard 1912:18); the marriage produced 496 normal, "respectable citizens, men and women prominent in every phase of social life" (ibid.:30).

Rural families like these were often thought to have inbred extensively, always with disastrous results (Anderson 1923; Martin 1923); it was noted that the "marked degeneracy" of Southern Italian immigrants came about through the same rural inbreeding in Italy (Vaughan 1914:64; cf. Davis 1925). Moreover, they often were referred to in the call for immigration restriction. Charles Davenport, in his paper "The Geography of Man in Relation to Eugenics" (1912a:308), exclaimed: "Ah, that in the hordes pressing at the gate at Ellis Island, we could distinguish the ['great progenitor'] John Prestons from the Ben Ishmaels of the future!" Thomas Salmon, an examining physician at Ellis Island, claimed that he and his colleagues would have spotted and deported the "head of the famous 'Jukes' family" had restrictive legislation and proper examinations been in effect at the time of Jukes' immigration (1913:248; cf. Howell 1914:99-100; Laughlin 1920:4-5; Davis 1925:78-80).

Caste Attitudes of the Eugenists

To a great extent, the views of the eugenists represented caste attitudes. They bemoaned the fact that the social system in the United States allowed upward mobility and ethnic intermarriage. Mark Haller, one of the first historians of the eugenics movement, has written that the eminent British psychologist William McDougall prescribed a caste system for the United States in his book *Is America Safe for Democracy?* (Haller 1963:162). McDougall, who came to the United States to head Harvard's psychology department in 1920, never used the word caste in relation to his prescriptions, but Haller's interpretation that McDougall's suggestions are caste-like is correct. Another historian, Barbara Solomon, writing about the influence of Boston elites on American society with an emphasis on their immigration restriction activities, adopted the term "Brahmin" following Oliver Wendell Holmes' observation that this group constituted "'the Brahmin caste of New England'" (Solomon 1956:3). Many writers before and since Solomon have followed the same usage. E. Digby Baltzell, in *The Protestant Establishment: Aristocracy and Caste in America* (1964), explored the concept further but did not dissect nativistic Americans' attitudes to discover in just what way they were "caste-ist."

Anthropologist George De Vos has argued that the "essential elements of caste" are made up of socio-structural and psychological features that are found in many societies rather than bound to the caste system of India (1967). I find many examples of the existence of caste attitudes in eugenist thought, and employ De Vos' six essential elements of caste below to illuminate these attitudes. While the first three elements can be found in a class society, De Vos considers the second three aspects as those which set a caste system apart from a class structure: endogamy, a religious or (pseudo)scientific ideology which supports exploitation, and an sense of revulsion on the part of the upper castes toward the lower castes. While De Vos examined caste systems as having both a social structural and symbolic psychocultural reality, the six essential elements of caste formed the ideal system that eugenists wanted to bring about. The formation of a caste ideology in any society can occur without a caste structure "on the ground," and points to a high degree of hostility on the part of elites toward threats to their dominance, in this case host hostility toward immigrants.

1. *The containment of all the groups involved within "a unified social-political structure"* (De Vos 1967:332). The immigrants did not set up their own sovereign states and were subject to the laws and cultural system of those in power. This is an obvious point, but it is related to the eugenists' fear that within the democratic sociopolitical structure, rather than one where inequality and social barriers were emphasized, miscegenation of both biological traits and political ideologies would destroy American society.

2. *The hierarchical arrangement of groups.* William McDougall maintained that there was a continuum of worth in society, measured by intelligence tests which were correlated with four American-born white ranked status groups, under which came Italians and Colored (1921:64). Drachsler reported a study where U.S. ethnic groups were ranked according to ten personal traits, with "Native White Americans," Germans, and English at the top and Austrian Slavs, South Italians, and Negroes at the bottom (Drachsler 1920:42). In *The Passing of the Great Race*, Madison Grant stated, "In the city of New York and elsewhere in the United States there is a native American aristocracy resting upon layer after layer of immigrants of lower races" (1919:5). He neglected to focus on the groups which occupied these layers, thereby utilizing the binary categorization that most eugenists addressed.

In general, society was most often described by the eugenists as a two-category system: the fight for hereditary boundary maintenance was between the fit and the unfit, the native-born and the foreign-born. Italian eugenist and criminal anthropologist Alfredo Niceforo lent support to the two-group view in a paper given at the First International Eugenics Conference in 1912 by stating "we can compare the characters of men of the poorer classes with the characters of men of the leisured classes" (1912:190), which he equated with "the characters of men of an inferior class with those of men of a superior class" (ibid.). Other examples include "stocks above the average" vs. "stocks below the average" given by Leonard Darwin, eugenist son of Charles Darwin (1923:18), "superior" vs. "mediocre" (Johnson 1923:420), "native stock" vs. "low-grade immigrants" (Commander 1907:233), and "desirable fraction" vs. "undesirable fraction of the world's population" (Carruth 1914:273). Many of the studies of the declining birth rate compared the fertility rates of Ivy League college graduates to those of the immigrants to indicate how poorly the upper classes were faring against the foreign-born (Commander 1907:3-9).

3. *Occupational specialization of groups.* Most of the Southern

and Eastern European immigrants worked in unskilled industrial jobs, and the affinity of many ethnic groups to specific jobs was observed and then stereotyped by many eugenists. Then, as today, political motives for emigration were held in higher esteem than economic "push" factors. The supposedly pure economic motives of the new immigrants were contrasted with the equally pure political idealism of the older settlers. Thus according to Frank J. Warne in his book *The Immigrant Invasion*, "Neither the desire for freedom of conscience in religious matters, nor the longing for civil and political liberty, nor the ambition to secure educational advantages, are uppermost as moving causes in the immigration of the present day. It is fundamentally economic" (1913:202; cf. Salmon 1913:253; Haworth 1915:108; Popenoe and Johnson 1918:299).

The most popular works on immigrants were economist John Commons' *Races and Immigrants in America* (1907), sociologist Edward Ross' *The Old World in the New* (1914), and IRL leader Prescott Hall's *Immigration* (1906). In these books and others, certain racial affinities to occupations were noted. The Southern Italians, of rural backgrounds, were adept at "earthwork" because "of their endurance of heat, cold, wet, and muck" (Ross 1914:102) and were "better fitted [than Jews] for manual labor and take more kindly to agricultural pursuits" (Hall 1906:56). The Jews had an "inborn love of money-making" (Ross 1914:146) and were a "marvelous and paradoxical race" who were "also the shrewdest exploiters of the poor and ignorant" (Commons 1907:93). Of the Polish Jew Madison Grant stated that his "dwarf stature, peculiar mentality and ruthless concentration on self-interest are being engrafted upon the stock of the nation" (1919:16). And "large of body, hard-muscled, and inexpert in making his head save his heels, the Slav inevitably becomes the unskilled laborer in the basic industries" (Ross 1914:126). The older immigrant Irish were still worthy of consideration as "others," showing their "genius" (Hall 1906:53) and "fitness" (Commons 1907:182) as political bosses through "the gift of words and of emotional appeal" (Warne 1913:160). Sociologist and eugenist Henry Fairfield Osborn proposed, "For the world's work, give me a pure-blooded Negro, a pure-blooded Mongol, a pure-blooded Slav, a pure-blooded Nordic, and ascertain through observation and experiment what each race is best fitted to accomplish in the world's economy" (1923:2-3). Osborn's view of the immigrants can be construed from his prediction of the outcome of his hypothetical experiment: "If the Negro fails in government, he may become a fine agriculturalist or a fine mechanic"

(1923:3).

4. *Birth ascription, accompanied by endogamy.* The concept that one's qualities, or lack of qualities, were inherited was central to eugenist ideology. Some degree of endogamy was implicit in the racial theories, for it was thought that any extended miscegenation would have resulted in "mongrelization" rather than the relatively pure types which continued to be reproduced.

One of the most alarmist themes of the eugenists was that "mongrelization" would mean the downfall of American institutions. The symbol of the melting-pot had become popularized by Israel Zangwill's 1909 play of that name, and although it was not a new idea its new popularity provided a convenient "collective representation" for the eugenists to attack. A plethora of theories were brought forward to predict the disasters of miscegenation. One common idea was that a crossing of races would produce an average of their qualities. Another was based on the concept of *reversion* of the offspring of a mixed-race union to the lower group's characteristics—a belief characteristic of caste systems cross-culturally. Madison Grant, in *The Passing of the Great Race*, very bluntly expressed this idea:

> The cross between a white man and an Indian is an Indian; the cross between a white man and a Negro is a Negro; the cross between a white man and a Hindu is a Hindu; and the cross between any of the three European races and a Jew is a Jew. [1919:18]

Harvard economics professor William Ripley identified the Nordic as a less primitive type than the modern peasant, who was "brunette, probably with black eyes and hair and a swarthy skin," and stated that "in the unions of rufous Irish and dark Italian types, a reversion in favour of brunetteness may result" (1908:235; cf. Rice 1929:303,307).

The *degeneration* concept was more malignant in its message: race-crossings result in offspring inferior to both parent races. The results of white/black marriages were a popular topic of interest to the eugenists in the 1920s, especially following the blacks' northward World War I migration. The "mixed race is physically the inferior of the white and the pure black," stated Frederick Hoffman at the Second International Congress on Eugenics, and added, "morally, the mulatto can not be said to be the superior of the pure black" (1923:175). Regarding race-crossing in general, Dr. Victor Vaughan stated in "Eugenics From the Point of View of the Physician" that "the bad of each side becomes dominant, and the mongrel whether man or beast, is no credit to the pure blood on either side" (1914:64; cf. Webber 1914:167; Davenport 1917; Rice 1929:309).

The logical plan of action, of course, would be to not marry across caste boundaries. It was to the eugenists' dismay that the American public never took to their movement as they would have liked, so eugenist support of marriage regulation through legislature was tempered by pessimism (Haller 1963:143). Horatio Pollock, statistician for the New York State Hospital Commission, complained about the inadequacy of marriage laws prohibiting marriages of the unfit; for the general public, he advocated public genealogies (1923:326), as did George Adami, who favorably referred to this sort of record as a "human stud book" (1923:284). Charles Davenport reported on state marriage laws in 1913, listing the 29 states that forbade white/black marriages (seven prohibited white/Asian and two white/"Indian"), and supported these laws, but made no comment on the advisability of native white/immigrant marriages. The eugenists had to be patient, hoping that education would inculcate its own sanctions regarding marriage proscriptions. It is not surprising that Gopalji Ahluwalia from Lahore, India was welcomed to the Second International Congress of Eugenics, where McDougall, Pollock and Adami gave their papers, to explain "The Hindu Ideal of Marriage" (1923:264-266).

Since the prospect of legislation preventing intergroup marriage was dismal—that is, the construction of a caste system was unlikely—the horrors of miscegenation were applied to arguments against further immigration. Speaking of the "vast experiment in eugenics" underway in the American immigrant nation, Thomas Salmon warned:

> The component races must be virile and sound; they must not be too divergent; the new race [i.e., American] must have a period of comparative isolation and inbreeding to fix its characters; *occasional* crossing with selected races of stock somewhat similar to the components should occur *from time to time.* [1913:241-242; emphasis added]

After making the same point, psychologist Kimball Young noted that the "evils" of the influx of Southern and Eastern Europeans had to be reduced by more restrictive legislation (1922:432-433).

5. *The existence of a religious or scientific ideological system which supports the prevailing practices.* Eugenists were attempting to introduce an ideology to bring about a caste-like system which had been "successful" in other times and places. The scientific management of society was a plank in many a Progressive's platform, and although criticism on the grounds of racism did carry some weight, science had ostensibly proven the objective differential "fitness" of the

races.

The most compelling scientific results that showed the relative inferiority of the immigrants came in two forms: intelligence tests and institutionalization statistics. IQ tests were widely applied for the first time during recruitment to the U.S. Army in World War I. Harvard psychology professor Robert Yerkes, Stanford professor of education Lewis Terman, and Henry Goddard, all eugenists, designed a version of the Binet test and oversaw its administration to more than 1.7 million men (Haller 1963:113). Carl Brigham, also a member of the group, published a summary and interpretation of the findings in *A Study of American Intelligence* (1923). The results were not surprising: "the Nordic type is superior to the Alpine," and "the Mediterranean race inferior to the Alpine" (Brigham 1923:183). Between 60.4% and 69.9% of immigrants from Russia, Italy, and Poland scored in the "D, D-, and below" category, while none had more than 2.7% in the A and B category; immigrants from England, Holland, and Denmark had between 8.7% and 13.6% D and below, and those from England and Scotland had 19.7% and 13% A and B (Yerkes 1921:698). The figures were extended to the national populations and it was said that six million of the 14 million aliens in the U.S. should not have been allowed entrance because their mental age was 11 years or less (Garis 1927:235; cf. Davis 1925:40). Many other studies of school children supported the belief in "racial" IQ differences (Garis 1927:237-238; Terman 1919:55-56; Young 1922). James Davis tied these findings to class: "Some day, what now seems apparent will be proved beyond doubt, namely, that the lowest economic orders of humanity, on the whole and in the average, [occupy] the lower orders of native intelligence, of family or hereditary mentality" (1925:123-124).

Statistical "proof" of immigrant inferiority was shown through comparative rates of institutionalization. The "expert eugenics agent" to Congress was Harry Laughlin, superintendent of the Eugenics Record Office, and he has become infamous for his massive documents of institutional statistics. Many before him had written of the immigrants' rates of institutionalization, but he devoted himself to showing in detail, through manipulation of statistics, the higher immigrant rates of feeble-mindedness, insanity, and pauperism relative to the native-born, and their high costs to the state (1921, 1923a, 1923b). His statement before Congress (1923b) was quoted in magazines and newspaper articles (Cellar in Traverso 1964:92), and is credited by many with "putting the icing on the cake" of the 1924 immigration restriction law.

Science as the key symbol of the rationalization for caste-ism did not prevent the manifestation of religious motives and proposals. Perhaps because of the scientific emphasis, the denigration of Southern and Eastern Europeans, who were largely Catholics and Jews, was not overtly supported by an appeal to an obviously religious bias. True, many Protestant clergy attended the Race Betterment and International Eugenics Conferences, but their most prominent representative, Rev. Walter Taylor Sumner, pointed out at the First Race Betterment Conference that the requirement that couples who are married in his Episcopal church in Chicago have a health certificate was by then also being followed by Jews (1914:510). This is not to deny the eugenists' overwhelming Protestantism; rather, non-Protestant religion was often seen by them as only one of the immigrants' alien cultural traits along with language, clothing, and other customs.

Avoidance of overt religious prejudices did not preclude the advocacy of eugenics as a new sort of scientific religion. Dr. Aldred S. Warthin, then President of the National Association of Physicians, gave a presentation at the Third Race Betterment Conference entitled "A Biologic Philosophy or Religion a Necessary Foundation for Race Betterment" (sic); in it, he spoke of "our duty to the immortal germ plasm" as the recognition of the "divinity of evolution" and the prohibition of the fit to commit the "biologic sin" of not reproducing themselves (1928:88-90).

Sociologist-eugenist Irving Fisher wrote to Charles Davenport in 1912:

> Eugenics can never amount to anything practically until it has begun, as Galton wanted it, to be a popular movement with a certain amount of religious flavor in it, and as . . . there is already a sentiment in favor of restricting immigration, . . . this is a golden opportunity to get people in general to talk eugenics. [quoted in Haller 1963:144]

Davenport took this to heart, for in 1916 he gave an address, "Eugenics as a Religion," which contained a "creed" of ten commitments for living a eugenic life, including one which stated, "I believe in such a selection of immigrants as shall not tend to adulterate our national germ plasm with socially unfit traits" (quoted in Chase 1980:161-162). Another proponent of eugenics preferred its social program "as it is—austere and cool rather than sentimental and heated" for himself (Keller 1914:271), but believed that to convince the general public the religious element should be emphasized—"it must enlist sentiment if it can, rather than reason; and the great compelling sentiment is fear" (ibid.:268).

6. *A "deeply felt fear of pollution or contamination as a result of unguarded contact of the more 'pure' with the less 'pure' individuals"* (De Vos 1967:333). The notion of the hereditary "taint" was widespread in the literature on immigration and the unfit (cf. MacDonald 1914:8; Work 1912:7). In Congress, "scum" and "polluting" were terms designating the new immigration (Taylor 1936:81), and some psychiatrists showed their own feelings for the "off-scourings of all Europe" (White 1903:279), their "species" (MacDonald 1914:8), and their "blight" and "stain" (Work 1912:7,9) on America. In 1896, Representative Bartholdt, Chairman of the House Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, stated in Congress that the Anglo-Saxon had a "feeling of aversion against the Latin races, and that this feeling was primarily responsible for the anti-immigration [drive]" (Taylor 1936:81). Charles Davenport recognized the significance of this repugnance, and in 1910 wrote to Francis Galton, "Now, a revulsion of feeling is coming about, and people are turning to your teaching" (quoted in Chase 1980:119). Perhaps the most graphic example of a eugenist's description of this visceral reaction was Lothrop Stoddard's (1924:240), in speaking about the fallacy of the melting-pot ideal:

> Unable to absorb these refractory aliens, America began to show symptoms of indigestion, painfully evident in many ways, from politics to social relations. Pain, however, is a great persuader, and the pangs of national indigestion presently grew so alarming that the American people had to sit up and do some hard thinking.

Demography and Political Displacement

One of the primary factors in examining the sources of host hostility is the mere presence of a large number of immigrants. Roy Garis said of the advocates of restriction, "They readily grant that had the new immigration come in smaller numbers it is likely that no . . . problems of assimilation and naturalization would have come into existence" (1927:229). Geographical proximity was of considerable importance, for much of the hostility arose either on the west coast, where the Asian immigration was centered, or in the area of interest here, the urban Northeastern U.S., where most of the European immigrants came to work and live. However, intimate contact of eugenists and other restrictionists with immigrants was not necessary, nor is there much evidence for its occurrence.

The 1920 Census showed that one third of the U.S. population was foreign-born or of foreign-born parentage; most in these groups lived in the Eastern United States, where they were estimated to constitute "perhaps three-fourths" of the population (Brewer 1930:41). The Report of the Massachusetts Committee on Immigration found that, in 1910, those of foreign birth or parentage constituted 66% of the state's population (1914:34). 1910 marked the year of highest percentage of the foreign born and their children in Eastern cities: 79% in New York, 77% in Chicago, 75% in Cleveland, 74% in Boston and Detroit, 57% in Philadelphia, 54% in St. Louis, and 38% in Baltimore (Thernstrom 1973:114).

The immigrants were noted to reside mainly in ethnic neighborhoods or "colonies" (Hunter 1965). One writer noted that New York City "contains more Jews than ever lived in Jerusalem except during the feasts of the Passover, more persons of German extraction than reside in any German city except Berlin, more people of Irish blood than inhabit Dublin, [and] more Italians than in Venice or Naples" (Haworth 1915:106). Writing on urban poverty, Robert Hunter spoke of how life in these enclaves was "often entirely alien to an American" (1965:263). Another writer from this period, upon spending time in these neighborhoods in New York city, stated: "For days and days I searched for Americans but the only thing American I saw was the dollar" (in Kraus 1966:160), and "On the corner of the street stood a policeman. I was tempted to ask him 'Please where is America?' But he stared me out of my wits" (ibid.:159).

Ross, Commons, Hunter, and Lincoln Steffens were but a few of the many writers who "exposed" the plight of the cities overcrowded with immigrants. High rates of population turnover which most likely characterized most cities at this time (Drachsler 1920:68-69; Thernstrom 1973:27) did not lessen the illusion of static or growing "colonies" of immigrants of the "herding instinct."

Perhaps the most frequent theme in the literature hostile to immigrants is that of "race suicide"—what I referred to as regressivism. Francis A. Walker, economist, statistician, and president of MIT analyzed the U.S. census statistics up to 1890 to show that the birth rate of the native, old-stock Americans was declining (as it was for the educated middle and upper classes in much of the Western world) as more and more immigrants arrived in the country. The reason for this, he thought, was that the natives did not want to bring their children into a world to compete with the immigrants, who were more willing to live in poor social and economic conditions. He then calculated, using the birth rate of the original American colonists and their

descendants from 1790 to 1830, that if the rate had remained steady, and no immigrants had come, the total population of the U.S. would be the same as it was in 1890. This, then, "amounted not to a reenforcement of our population, but to a replacement of native by foreign stock" (Walker 1899:425).

It was Ross that first gave the relative birth-rate phenomenon its name "race suicide" in 1901 before the American Academy of Political and Social Science. Theodore Roosevelt exhorted American mothers to stop contributing to race suicide through their decreased fertility (Higham 1981:147). It soon became a widely known idea, spawning two books (Commander 1907; Iseman 1912) as well as 35 articles in popular magazines from 1905 to 1909 alone (Higham 1981:147). I have found three to four times that number of references to and discussions of race suicide in the academic journals and eugenic publications from 1901 into the 1920s.

The areas of most concern were the Northeastern cities, but generalizations from the birth rates found there were extended to the nation at large. In 1905, the average number of children per married woman of native birth in Rhode Island was 2.06, for foreign-born mothers, 3.35 (Hoffman 1912:335). The author who presented these statistics summed up the trend by stating:

> The increase in the proportion of childless families among the native-born of native stock, is evidence of physical deterioration, and must have a lasting and injurious effect on national life and character. [Hoffman 1912:337]

Prescott Hall reviewed similar statistics from the state of Massachusetts and supported the contention that "the native population . . . seems to be dying out" (Hall 1908:113).

Various solutions were suggested. In 1909, William McDougall introduced his "new plan" for Britain, proposing that the state reward its employees for each child they produce, on the assumption that civil employees were "fit" individuals, but in 1921 lamented, "I found no one who had a good word for it" (1923:62) in Britain or America. When Margaret Sanger began the birth control movement, its effectiveness, shown by a decreased birth rate, was seen in the educated classes only. This prompted many eugenists to promote wider dissemination of birth control information in hopes that it would reach and affect the lower classes. Although many more eugenists saw their movement's involvement in birth control as futile, these enthusiasts brought about eugenic resolutions at the International Birth Control Conference in 1925 (Haller 1963:92). Beyond the limited success of birth control was the gold mine in popular support for

immigration restriction.

The influential scare tactic of race suicide appealed to the future orientation of its audience. Elsewhere I have noted the limitations of looking only at the contemporary circumstances of host/immigrant relations in understanding the sources of host hostility (1986). Host subjective considerations of past, present, and future relations with other groups influence the processes of both scapegoating and reaction to economic and political competition. The future dimension is seen in host descriptions of scenarios that are millenial and occur where the existing stratified relations are in flux.

The most gripping aspect of the call to stop societal regression was by reference to the ultimate expression of racial dominance: politics. If fears of biological degeneration did not frighten people, it was understood that a threat to national integrity would. Henry Fairfield Osborn wrote in the introduction to Madison Grant's *The Passing of the Great Race*:

> Race has played a far larger part than either language or nationality in moulding the destinies of men; race implies heredity and heredity implies all the moral, social and intellectual characteristics and traits which are the springs of politics and government. [1919:vii]

The best description of the dramatic possibilities from a eugenic point of view is found in a 1907 book by the name of *The American Idea: Does the National Tendency Toward a Small Family Point to Race Suicide or Race Development?* In it, author Lydia Commander saw three possible futures for America, all of them negative. In the first scenario, assimilation, "the original American and his ideals would vanish before a new people and a new government" (ibid.:67). The second possible future was the formation of a caste or slave system where immigrants would "exist as inferior and subject races dominated by an American stratum above. Under such conditions the American democracy would disappear" (ibid.:67). This in fact is what many eugenists wanted because they did not desire assimilation, nor Commander's third scenario: immigrant colonies would gain numerical strength and overthrow the existing system, "turn[ing] this into a new and different nation" (ibid.:67).

In his book *The Age of Reform*, Richard Hofstader maintained that the motives of the progressive reformers stemmed from their relative deprivation in the "status revolution" (1955b:130ff.). Made up of middle-class Anglo-Saxon natives, these "Mugwumps" suffered from a decline in social status relative to the new industrialists, who rose from a status equal to or below them. Thus Hofstader stated, "In a

strictly economic sense these men were not growing poorer as a class, but their wealth and power were being dwarfed by comparison with the new eminences of wealth and power. They were less important, and they knew it" (1955b:137).

While Hofstader noted the importance of the Mugwumps' hostility towards the immigrants and the political bosses who controlled them, he emphasized that the primary stimulant of their activities was their deprived status relative to the nouveau riche. The eugenists, whom I consider to be progressives, also saw business interests as a problem through their promotion of immigration for labor. However, the immigrants themselves were perceived as the major political as well as racial "direct threat" to these protectors of the Anglo-Saxon race. In connection with this aspect is Norman and Susan Fainstein's statement that Progressivism was significantly "shaped by its antagonism to the machine" in big-city politics (1974:14). The city boss/political machine is widely recognized to have been dependent on urban immigrant populations for its existence. Political bosses have been analyzed as serving a social welfare function to immigrants in return for patronage (Merton 1957:71-82), even though they may also have prevented immigrants' upward mobility in order to remain in power (Fainstein and Fainstein 1974:18-20).

The importance of the role of the Irish in many political machines is undisputed. Barbara Miller Solomon documented the increasing political control of the Irish-Americans in Massachusetts in the middle to late nineteenth century, and their displacement of the "Brahmin" Adams family (1956:28-32). Peter Eisinger has noted that Charles Francis Adams' hostile reaction to the Irish was not idiosynchratic but

> it emerged from the broader recognition of the disintegration of Yankee political and cultural hegemony in New England as a consequence in large measure of the rise of the Irish. He was simply one of many losers, unaccustomed as a class to the experience of minority status, in the most dramatic case of ethnic political transition in American history. [1980:2]

The dependence of political machines on immigrants, often with Irish-Americans as their leaders, did not go unrecognized by the eugenists (Commons 1907; Hall 1908:187; Ross 1914:259-281). Edward Ross was the most virulent in attributing the conditions of the "worst-governed cities in the civilized world" to the "Hibernian domination" (1914:262). He also pointed out that purges of corrupt individuals from a machine have always failed, *"because its supply of raw material* [immigrants] *has never been cut off"* (1914:274; emphasis in

original).

The example of the Irish provoked the eugenists' fears that the "new" immigrants would be next in line to exercise political power, ultimately reducing the white Anglo-Saxon race in the U.S. to a displaced elite minority group. Prescott Hall predicted that the number of foreign-born and their sons working as bosses would probably increase after 1908 (1908:184). Charles Davenport tied this idea to race suicide:

> Recent immigrants and the less effective descendants of the earlier immigrants still continue to have large families; so that from one thousand Roumanians today in Boston, at the present rate of breeding, will come a hundred thousand two hundred years hence to govern fifty descendants of Harvard's sons! [1912a:309]

In his book *Immigration*, Hall stated that "it is perhaps fortunate" that Slav and Latin immigrants showed a lower rate of naturalization than newcomers from Britain, Scandinavia, and Germany because of their manipulation by bosses and "relative unfitness" to participate in a democracy (1908:184). Edward Ross claimed that America should not admit to citizenship "myriads of strangers who have not yet passed the civic kindergarten" (1914:279). Madison Grant took the next logical step in criticizing the U.S. democratic system by comparing "what progress humanity can make under the control of universal suffrage, or the rule of the average" to "the habits of certain snakes which wiggle sideways and disregard the head with its brains and eyes" (1919:7).

Conclusion

Mass immigration to the United States and a strong and organized opposition to it was seen in the first quarter of this century. The attitudes of the middle-class, "progressive" eugenists towards immigrants were some of the most hostile and caste-ist. The regressivism in society perceived by eugenists was more accurately their own collective *regression*, a retreat to a type of ethnocentrism that any group may experience when backed into a corner of its shrinking turf. A theme such as race suicide is of paramount importance to take into account, for the concept of group continuity or survival is found across cultures. Anxiety regarding Anglo-Saxon ethnic displacement was based mainly on past and contemporary experience with the Irish-Americans, mixed with a strong infusion of fear of future-oriented scenarios in which "natives" would either become

overwhelmed by the negative consequences of miscegenation or would remain relatively homogeneous and dominated by the politically ascendant immigrants.

The heightened fear of ethnic displacement was most severe during and after the war. The German-Americans had been seen as "assimilable" before this time, but their anti-war stance made the Anglo-Saxons believe that it was not so. Young men returned from the war to an economic depression while the cost of living had risen; unions had gained strength and their strikes furthered the fears of political radicalism, which were acted on in the Palmer Raids or the "Red Scare" of 1919 and 1920 (Coben 1964). By this time the more conservative Samuel Gompers of the American Federation of Labor was writing within the eugenics genre on behalf of immigration restriction (Higham 1981:121-122). The reformed Ku Klux Klan became popular even in northern states, supported the eugenic ideal of Anglo-Saxon purity, and lobbied Congress for restriction of the non-Nordic immigration (Thornbrough 1961; Higham 1981:277,321).

Despite their successes in sterilization legislation and immigration restriction, the eugenists were disappointed that the general public never showed a long-term commitment to eugenical theories (cf. Haller 1963:143). The caste attitudes of the eugenists motivated them to inculcate these same attitudes in the general public, but the rest of the nation was soon sated by the immigration law and lost all interest during the Depression Era with its more environmentalist ways of thinking. However, the dangers of biological theories and their application in politics always continue to threaten to come to the fore, especially in the case of majority or host populations facing their minority or immigrant populations.

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